



Mughal and Rajput patronage of the bhakti sect of the Maharajas, the Vallabha Sampradaya, 1640-1760 A. D.

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MUGHAL AND RAJPUT PATRONAGE OF THE BHAKTI SECT OF THE
MAHARAJAS, THE VALLABHA SAMPRADAYA, 1640-1760 A.D.

by

Edwin Allen Richardson

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF ORIENTAL STUDIES

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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PREFACE

This dissertation is the result of a prolonged interest in devotional Hinduism and the history and ritual of the Vallabha Sampradaya. The sect was first observed in 1973 while in India on a Summer Language Fellowship from the American Institute of Indian Studies. Subsequently, after visiting Mathura and meeting with officials of a Vallabhacharya haveli, much of the Hindi primary source material was acquired. In the United States collections at The University of Arizona, Yale University, the Library of Congress, Columbia University, Union Theological Seminary, the New York Public Library (Oriental section), Drew and Duke Universities were regularly consulted. Materials from the National Archives of India were made available with the help of Dr. Edward Haynes. Bibliographical data on the study of pushtimarg and the Vallabha Sampradaya were generously provided by Dr. Norvin Hein of Yale Divinity School. Through Dr. Hein's help copies of important secondary sources as well as additional sectarian publications were obtained. Linguistic advise in translating difficult passages in Hindi and Braj Bhasha was given by Dr. Anoop C. Chandola, Department of Oriental Studies, The University of Arizona.

The work was prepared under the watchful guidance of dissertation director, Dr. Alfreda E. Meyers and Dr. Michael Mahar both of the Department of Oriental Studies, The University of Arizona. With their consultation and support the text was brought to its present form.

I am also indebted to Dr. Robert Burns, Chairman of the Religious Studies Program at The University of Arizona, Kathy Moore, who provided immeasurable help with the final draft, Mona Banerjee, and most of all my parents for their continued encouragement.

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ABSTRACT

Scriptural exegesis and textual analysis frequently suggest that the bhakti or devotional movement was propagated exclusively by the poor and downtrodden while ridiculing the wealthy and ruling elite. However, the Vallabha Sampradaya, a major bhakti sect, was sustained from the sixteenth through twentieth centuries by the patronage of princes and kings.

In a continuation of the practice of temple managers as entrepreneurs, Vallabhacharya gosains extended the dominion of the seven incarnations of Sri Nathji through patronage. The sect accrued land, power, and a strong economic base through grants from Mughal and Rajput courts. Two Emperors issued farmans to the cult, protecting its cattle and exempting it from taxation. The gosains or spiritual leaders of the Sampradaya gave darshan to Akbar and Shah Jahan thereby magnifying the dominance of Sri Nathji whom they served. Further, for over two hundred years the Maharanas of Mewar supported the sect with a succession of muafi grants. Through these royal orders the isolated village, Sinhar, became a holy city, Nathdwara. The goswamis exerted total control over commerce, local industry, and taxation. Nathdwara operated as a veritable Vatican, levying fees on pilgrims who entered its gates, assessing all goods produced in the market place, and controlling the services instituted for the maintenance of the god.

So complete was the dominance of the goswamis that a Mewari school of art emerged to shape the Krishna image in neighboring states.

In Kishangarh, the prince Savant Singh became so enthralled with the Vallabhacharya faith that he devoted his life to Braj poetry praising Sri Nathji. He inspired a series of paintings portraying Krishna in the very image of the Rajput monarchy. Thus, Krishna became enthroned as the Cult of the Maharajas spread its influence across northern Rajasthan, a graphic illustration of the symbiotic relationship between the court and bhakti sampradaya.

Patrons in Mewar, Kishangarh, and Jaipur helped build the sect's havelis or temples, adorn its images with gold and silver, and introduce its doctrines to the regents of other states. In so doing they sustained a class of religious leaders, the maharajas, who supported by the state became autonomous, landed aristocrats whose only allegiance was to the deity they served. In turn, the goswamis legitimized the court by bringing Krishna into the palace. In Jaipur a Vallabhacharya haveli was even constructed as an integral part of the official residence of the regent. In Mewar and Kishangarh, miniature paintings showed the head of state attending darshan.

A complementary result deriving from court patronage was the sect's popularity with the masses. Not only was village participation in sectarian worship enhanced by the patronage but had the additional benefit of offering the devotee a chance to please the secular ruler. Thus membership in the Sampradaya spanned all social strata, and incorporated the poor and oppressed traditionally considered the backbone of the bhakti movement. This, in part, explains the ability of the sect to survive from the sixteenth through twentieth centuries.

CHAPTER 1

THE ROLE OF POWER AND DOMINANCE IN A NORTH INDIAN BHAKTI SAMPRADAYA

Bhakti, a tradition based in scriptural and theological reform, is part of the mainstream of Indian culture and dependent on established patterns of the manipulation of power, economic and social dominance and purity and pollution. The historical North Indian bhakti movement developed the same entrepreneurial practices associated with the maximization of the deity's abode as temples outside the devotional tradition throughout the sub-continent.

For the gosain of a bhakti sampradaya and the shebait (business manager) of a large South Indian temple, the accumulation of wealth as a measure of authority and dominance is a constant process.¹ Income, often produced by direct taxation of village properties, by gifts to the deity and by established avenues of patronage allow the temple and bhakti sect to maintain a level of dignity and magnificance expected in pujas and darshans. The lavish decoration of the shrine and the treatment of a god or goddess as visiting royalty demands a constant and increasing flow of revenue. In order to meet these needs the gosain and shebait become entrepreneurs, controlling vast sums of money and

1. The process of securing income and status has been observed in Hinduism and Buddhism. The political and economic power of Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka has been explored by Hans Dieter-Evers in Monks, Priests and Peasants: A Study of Buddhims and Social Structure in Central Ceylon (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972).

investing funds to increase the supply of capital. They are sources of spiritual, economic and ritualistic power who depend on the deity for their position. They are clever administrators who maximize the temple's wealth and prestige in the god's best interest.

In South Asia this use of power is a normative way of maintaining the ritualistic home of a deity who out of grace consents to reside in a temporal environment.² The god who is given darshan or puja establishes his realm through the ability of the gosain or shebait to invest the temple's profits. Thus, the prudent use of economic power is an expected trait of the administrator who provides for the image's comfort. The purity and reputation of the god determine the shebait's ability to expand the temple's assets. Conversely, the skill with which funds are invested and patronage obtained magnifies the god's prestige. In a symbiotic process the administrator and deity reinforce their mutual authority and the dominance of those princes and kings who are the deity's benefactors. To the gosain or spiritual leader of a bhakti sampradaya, this mechanism is enhanced by an ancestral relationship with a charismatic founder figure who showers his descendents with the aura of acharya and holy man.

2. The accumulation of power based on land control and an association with established authority is well documented in South Asia. See, Robert Eric Frykenberg, ed., Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969) and Eugene F. Irshick, Politics and Social Conflict in South India: the Non-Brahmin Movement and Tamil Separatism 1916-1929 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

Yet, as repeatedly demonstrated by historians³ and textualists,⁴

bhakti has been perceived as the faith of poor, depressed classes who

3. The historian H. G. Rawlinson concludes, "One of the most remarkable facts of Indian history is the vitality of Hinduism. Hindu India had suffered sorely at the hands of her Muhammeden conquerors. . . . But the torch had been kept alight and handed down, chiefly owing to the bhakti or devotional movement, which survived all persecution. . . . The bhakti movement, it is interesting to note, was a popular one. Its strength lay not among the Brahmins or in the Rajput courts, but the common people." H. G. Rawlinson, India, A Short Cultural History (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1952), p. 377.

Similarly, the art historian Robert Skelton suggests, "The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were a period of acute religious ferment and revival as Hinduism began to recover in the North from the shock sustained by the collapse of the Hindu dynasties following the Muslim conquest. The great era of religious patronage by powerful rulers was over and the revival of Hinduism could take place on a popular level." Robert Skelton, Rajasthan Temple Hangings of the Krishna Cult from the Collection of Karl Mann, New York (New York: American Federation of Arts, 1973), p. 26.

Richard Lannoy has also described bhakti in terms of the social outcaste, remarking, "It is evident from the ecstatic, sometimes orgiastic nature of bhakti religiosity, that the fervid emotion it encourages can be traced to the paroxysm of the social outcaste" Richard Lannoy, The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 206.

Lannoy's sentiments are echoed by historian Aziz Ahmad in Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 142, 152, and Victor Raghavan in The Great Integrators: The Saint-Singers of India, Patel Memorial lecture (Delhi: Government of India, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1966). Raghavan has postulated that "the great integrators" of the bhakti movement were poets and saints who spread an interest in devotion by wandering from village to village.

4. Thomas J. Hopkins concludes, "The Bhagavata does not represent the viewpoint of the established orthodox, social or economic groups. On the contrary the wealthy, the learned and the influential supporters of the status quo appear as the prime opponents of devotional religion as it appears in the Bhagavata. The wealthy ridicule the standards of behavior of the devotees, and those who are proud of their social, economic or religious status despise and even persecute the poor but righteous people devoted to the Lord. Praise of poverty and compassion for the distressed characterize the social teachings of the Bhagavata. From these emphases, as from the evidence of conflict with the wealthy and secure, we can assume that the devotees in general were poor--either by choice or by circumstance." Thomas J. Hopkins, "The Social Teachings of the Bhagavata Purana," in Milton Singer, Krishna:

are by virtue of their devotion removed from the dynamics of power and authority. Bhakti is deemed to be a popular rejection of authority and of the interests of the "status quo"⁵ who shun the tenets of devotional

Myths, Rites and Attitudes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books, 1966), pp. 3-22. Hopkins speaks of the twelfth century Bhagavata religion inferring that the ideal bhakta was poor and antagonistic to established social and economic authority. Yet, in other works he broadens this suggestion making it apply to the later Krishna centered expressions of bhakti in North India. He concludes, "The devotional emphasis carries over also into the Bhagavata's social attitudes. Great compassion is shown for the poor and lowly, caste distinctions are declared irrelevant for the devotees of Krishna, and there is great praise for devotees who are sudras or members of lowly castes. The appeal throughout is to the simple followers of Lord Krishna who claim no qualifications except devotion and no purity except purity of heart." Thomas J. Hopkins, The Hindu Religious Tradition, Religious Life of Man Series (Encino, California: Dickenson Publishing Co., 1971), p. 124.

The author summarizes his observations, "This message had great power when it was first set forth by the Alvars, and its power remained as it was transmitted through the Bhagavata Purana. Later Vaishnava devotional movements almost all were characterized in their initial stages by intense devotional fever. . . . a succession of Vaishnava devotional movements swept through Maharashtra and North India, not all Krishna-centered but all distinguished by ardent devotion and appeal to a popular following." Ibid.

5. Unclear references such as the "status quo" are used by Hopkins and others to link this image of bhakti with another common generalization: the inference that bhakti was antagonistic to Vedic religion and practice and to the authority and role of Brahmin priests; a subject of scholarly debate.

D. S. Sharma, a participant in this debate, defends a similar point of view in, Hinduism Through the Ages, Bhavan's Book University (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1967), p. 40. Citing arguments by Justice Ranade, Sharma concludes that the bhakti movement was the result of the masses and the lower echelons of society, who were rarely Brahmins.

The debate is continued by other scholars including Edward C. Dimock, The Place of the Hidden Moon: Erotic Mysticism in the Vaisnavasahajiva Cult of Bengal (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966) and J. A. van Buitenen, "On the Archaism of the Bhagavata Purana," in Milton Singer, ed., Krishna: Myths, Rites and Attitudes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books, 1966), pp. 23-41. Dimock concludes that the bhakti movement was sharply anti-Brahmanical while van Buitenen holds that the Bhagavata Purana was written in an archaic manner and in the style of the Vedas.

religion. Bhakti is stereotyped as a popular movement, spread by itinerant and mendicant preachers, that rejected elitism, scoffed at secular authority and at the same time allowed a depressed, impoverished class of believers to seek fresh access to the Great Tradition of Hinduism. While there is truth in this position such an analysis ignores or overlooks significant and extensive evidence which suggests that the sampradayas of the North Indian bhakti tradition were spread from region to region by the patronage of princes and emperors. The ruler who adopts bhakti as his personal religion, attends the temples and shrines of its leaders for darshan, and vocalizes its doctrinal premises, assures that the populace affected by his rule will attempt to do the same. The village, through this process becomes subject to two sources of authority, the ruler and the sampradaya that leases land to tenant farmers. The prince or emperor continues to give darshan to the general population but also receives it from the sampradaya. This assures the continued growth of the cult and the obedience of villagers loyal to both a sacral and a temporal authority. The result is a total process combining ritualistic and economic forms of authority which are self perpetuating.

The dynamics of propaganda are often a large measure of the way the bhakti sampradaya exerts its control. The use of tenant services assures that a significant percentage of the inhabitants of temple and sectarian lands will regularly come into contact with the pomp and ceremony the sect inspires. The myths and legends, the status and prestige, the virtue of being closely associated with a source of ritualistic purity all contribute to the devotees' attraction to the

sect. In this manner the priests, shebaits and pujaris are able to extend and magnify their economic and political dominance.

Some of the problems with the perception of bhakti sampradayas as major entrepreneurs include the self proclaimed emphasis that devotion is a measure of merit in the face of measuring merit in terms of economic dominance. Yet, to the devotee who sees simultaneously the prosperity of the sect and measures merit through devotion, no conflict exists. Economic advantage and ritualistic purity achieved through devotion work together in a symbiotic relationship to nourish the intensity of the cult's dedication to god and the ability of the sampradaya to expand. Devotion has been rewarded and the reward encourages enhanced devotion. The sect obtains additional lands, attracts new devotees and constructs more temples. For the shebait, pujari or goswami who administers funds, invests capital and decorates the shrine to appear as an exquisite palace there can be no contradiction.⁶

6. However, scholars have often perceived such a contradiction between economic dominance and devotion. J. Duncan M. Derrett, who has contributed to the ongoing study of Hindu religious endowments describes the relationship between economic power and devotion as problematical. He observes, "The idol has his house, his attendants, his hours of audience, his repose. He has his consort or consorts, other idols, and these have their own establishments. Payment for the buildings and their upkeep, the idol's meals and entertainment, baths, cooks, reciters of prayers, all must have some means of livelihood. The idol requires, from this point of view, an establishment and lastly a business manager. The more famous the deity the more important the idol and its shrines, the greater the number of visitors. The question of vows and thank offerings naturally arises. The idol accumulates wealth, and this somehow has to be invested or deployed. Though the actual cost of the god's meals may amount to no more than Rs. 5 a day, dedications and offerings may bring in a yearly income of some Rs. 5,000. What is to happen to this accumulation? The business manager, to whom the law gives the general name shebait must manage

This dissertation specifically focuses on a major bhakti sect, the Vallabha Sampradaya, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The study compliments the work of Richard Barz⁷ who translated a major sectarian tract, Mridula Marfatia⁸ who completed a thorough analysis of pushtimarg and Rajendra Jindal⁹ who demonstrated the ability of Vallabhacharya temples in Nathdwara to perpetuate a dominant bhakti tradition.

it. In whose interest? The idols. Can the interest of the god differ from that of the shebait? Naturally" J. Duncan M. Derrett, "The Reform of Hindu Religious Endowments," in Donald E. Smith, ed., South Asian Politics and Religion (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 311-336.

Even in Theravada Buddhism this same perception of conflict has been observed. Donald E. Smith writes, "A British civil servant who had spent many years in Burma wrote at the turn of the century, 'No one can imagine even in the far future any monk of the Buddha desiring temporal power, or interfering in any way with the government of the people.' Like so many others, the writer started with the formal tenets of Buddhism and drew logical inferences from them. The monk is engaged in the quest for Nirvana, he reasoned, and political power can be of no possible assistance, but on the contrary is likely to prove a snare to spiritual progress. The Vinaya, the code of regulations governing the Sangha (order of monks) prohibits the monks' involvement in all worldly affairs. Twenty years later, however, British rule in Burma was shaken by the first important nationalist leader, the Buddhist monk U Ottama." Donald E. Smith, "The Political Monks and Monastic Reform," in Donald E. Smith, ed., South Asian Politics and Religion (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 489.

7. Richard Barz, "Early Developments within the Bhakti Sect of Valabhācārya According to Sectarian Tradition" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1971). Barz's translation of Caurasi Vaisnavan ki Varta is comparable to earlier studies of important pieces of bhakti scripture such as the Bhagavata Purana. His work makes a major devotional tract directly inspired by the Bhagavata available outside India.

8. Mridula I. Marfatia, Philosophy of Vallabhācārya (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967). Marfatia's work is the best and most recent presentation of Vallabhacharya philosophy and theology.

9. Rajendra Jindal, Culture of a Sacred Town: A Sociological Study of Nathdwara (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1976).

The dissertation examines how this cult, utilizing the patronage of princes and emperors, achieved a power base in northwest India through the acquisition of land and wealth. It traces the ways in which temples maintained their images and established the gadis of the seven svarupas through the interdependence of goswami and emperor or Maharana. It demonstrates the ways in which temple managers enhanced both sacred and secular authority, as the sect utilized the same "dynamics of dominance" recognized as a method for maintaining jati authority in villages throughout the Indian sub-continent.

The economic base for the achievement of dominance was patronage. The Sampradaya sought and received the continuing support of three Mughal Emperors and the personal devotion of the Maharanas of Mewar, a major and autonomous Hindu state, for more than two hundred years. The goswamis became entrepreneurs, expanding their hold on grazing lands for their cattle, converting chieftans who subsequently donated entire villages to the sect, and gradually gaining economic, political and cultural control of the city of Nathdwara.

The evidence for Mughal patronage of the Vallabha Sampradaya comes from a series of farmans and parwanas written between 1577 and 1643 A.D. The documents have been catalogued by the Government of India and are described in The National Register of Private Records.¹⁰

10. See, Republic of India, The National Archives of India, National Register of Private Records, Descriptive Lists of Documents Available in Rajasthan (Based on Information Received in 1959-1960), No. 1, Part II, #792-805 "Collection of His Holiness Tilkayat Maharaj of Nathdwara" (Bikaner: Rajasthan, 1972) and Republic of India, The National Archives of India, National Register of Private Records, Descriptive Lists of Documents Available in Mysore, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and National Archives of India, New Delhi (Based

Many of the same grants are included in James Tod's Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan.¹¹ Further, they also appear in a sectarian source, Kānkrolī kā Itihāsa, in full detail.¹² As part of the research these grants have been translated and are presented with the Hindi text. They show the economic power and political dominance of the Sampradaya in the major north Indian city, Mathura. They provide the goswamis with tax exempt properties and the ability to control all economic activities in those lands.¹³

The evidence for Rajput patronage of the Sampradaya comes from the holdings of private collections in Rajasthan,¹⁴ catalogued by the National Archives of India. Numerous documents issued from the time of Maharana Jagat Singh in the mid-seventeenth century through his

on Information Received in 1959-1960), No. 1, Part III, #1181 "Collection of Goswami of Govind Deoji Mandir, Jaipur" (Bikaner: Rajasthan, 1972). Hereafter, documents in these collections are referred to as National Register of Private Records and cited by part and document number.

11. The documents are cited in all editions of James Tod's Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan. The first edition of this work was, Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1829).

12. Kanthmani Shastri, Kānkrolī kā Itihāsa, Vol. II (Kankroli: Vidya Vibhag, V, 2116).

13. Examples of documents to be discussed include a farman issued on September 13, 1577 describing the protection of the sect's lands, temples and the provision of grazing rights for the sampradaya's cattle. On March 9, 1581 this document was succeeded by another farman, this time issued in the name of Hamida Banu the mother of Emperor Akbar. The farman shows the continuing interest of the royal family in the Vallabha Sampradaya. Grants issued in the mid-seventeenth century by Shah Jahan continue this same tradition citing specific villages where the cattle of the sect were permitted to graze.

14. See, footnote 10.

successors in the eighteenth century show the continuous interest of the regents of Mewar in the sect. Yet, these documents also show an increasing degree of support for the autonomy of the cult and its ability to have complete control and absolute dominance over grazing lands and villages. Accordingly, these muafi grants give the sect authority to collect all taxes and fees on villages in its realm and provide protection for its caravans coming to and from Nathdwara. Finally, and most significantly, the sect is given control over commerce, extracting duties on raw materials produced by devotees in the Gujarat¹⁵ while in Nathdwara regulating the types of goods and services supported by the community. Thus, in the manner of established temples throughout the sub-continent the cult extended its dominance to the towns from which it drew support.

15. This information is extracted from Yadunath Vrajratna's A History of the Sect of the Maharajas or Vallabhacharyas in Western India (London: Trubner and Co., 1865). Additional support for the continuation of Rajput patronage of the Vallabha Sampradaya beyond 1760 is found in: State Government of Rajasthan, Government Central Press, Report of the Nathdwara Inquiry Commission (Jaipur, 1959). The Report provides a significant historical overview of the sect in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and lists recent acquisitions of the Nathdwara temple. Farmans of the Maharanas of Mewar, identical in language and intent to those of earlier centuries are included in this valuable text. Further, detailed accounts of the land holdings of Vallabhacharya Maharajas are contained in Government of India, Manager of Publications, Rajputana and Ajmer, List of Ruling Princes, Chiefs and Leading Personages, Seventh Edition (Delhi, 1939) and B. N. Motiwala, Karsondas Mulji, A Biographical Study (Bombay: Karsondas Mulji Centenary Celebration Committee, 1935). Finally, an accurate discussion of the Vallabha Sampradaya in Mathura in the nineteenth century is to be found in: F. S. Growse, Mathura: A District Memoir (Oudh: Oudh Government Press, 1883). Growse's Memoir is supplemented by the recent work of Norvin Hein on Vaishnavite drama in Mathura in The Miracle Plays of Mathura (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972).

The evidence for the continued spread of the Vallabha Sampradaya in other parts of Rajasthan in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is taken largely from art history.¹⁶ A series of paintings in Mewar, Kishangarh and Bundi¹⁷ show the manner in which artists associated with the sect sought patrons in neighboring states as the cult became the personal religion of different rulers. In Kishangarh state the Sampradaya became well established as the personal religion of a succession of Maharajas and their families. Sri Nathji was worshipped in the form of Sri Kalyan Raj in elegant and lavish settings--the very best that the cultured nobility residing in the palace could afford. In Vallabhacharya theology¹⁸ Krishna was conceived as a prince who by

16. The role of the Nathdwara School of art and the production of pichhavai (temple hangings) is established in: Skelton, Rājāsthānī Temple Hangings.

17. The paintings discussed in the text are from several different collections and monographs including: Karl Khandavala, ed., Kishangarh Paintings (New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademie, 1971). Also cited are: William George Archer, Indian Painting in Bundi and Kotah (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1959); Cleveland Museum of Art, Indian Art from the George P. Bickford Collection (Cleveland, 1975); and Walter Spink, The Quest for Krishna: Paintings and Poetry of the Krishna Legend (Ann Arbor: privately published, 1972).

18. Two other recent books have become standard sources on Vallabhacharya philosophy and theology. Published by sectarian presses they are Jethalal G. Shah's Shri Vallabhacharya, His Philosophy and Religion (Nadiad: Pustimargiya Pustakalaya, 1969) and Manilal C. Parekh's Shri Vallabhacharya, Life, Teachings and Movement (A Religion of Grace) (Rajkot: Shri Bhagavata Dharma Mission, 1969). The former is a detailed survey of Vallabha's philosophical system. The author discusses the relationship of pushtimarg to monistic and dualistic schools of Hindu thought. He includes an analysis of shuddhadvaita and Vallabha's refutation of Sankara's vedanta. He defines bhakti seva and rasa as understood and experienced by Vallabha. Finally, he provides a brief sketch of Vallabha's life according to sectarian tradition and surveys the devotional writings of the astachap poets and sectarian theologians. The latter, Parekh's Shri Vallabhacharya is less

virtue of his historical and mythological identity could only be worshipped in the best of palaces. Even in the forests of Braj where the deity sported with gopis and illusively changed form, he was still conceptualized as a prince. This dimension of Vallabhacharya thought found a natural and convenient home in the courts of Kishangarh, Bundi and Mewar where patronage of the sect became well established.

In achieving the support of Mughal Emperors and Rajput princes, the Vallabha Sampradaya not only supported the production of temple hangings and miniature paintings but financed a wide body of sectarian literature¹⁹ which was soon disseminated among its members. Literature of this type is still being produced in parts of Rajasthan and the Gujarat,²⁰ and is continuing evidence of the total economic dominance

speculative than Shah's volume. However, like Shah, Parekh chooses not to discuss the history of the sect.

19. In addition to the major Sanskrit treatises of Vallabhacharya, a wide variety of vernacular literature exists. Perhaps the most significant of these devotional tracts is Caurasi Vaisnavan ki Varta. Written in Braj Bhasha, a dialect of Hindi, this narrative describes legends and myths of the original eighty-four converts of Vallabhacharya. It is a significant text for the sect as it is used both as a history of important contributors to the textual traditions of the cult (including the astachap poets Sur Das, Khumban Das, Parmananda Das and Kirshna Das) and as a source of Vaishnavite inspiration. See, Richard Barz, "Early Developments within the Bhakti Sect of Vallabhācārya According to Sectarian Tradition."

20. A significant work currently published by sectarian presses is: Prabhu Dayal Mital, Brajasthāna Vallabha Sampradāys Itihāsa (Mathura: Sahitya Sansthan, 1968). The text is a history of the leadership of the Sampradaya written from a devotional point of view by an adherent. Accordingly, the work gives a biography of Vallabhacharya, a description of his path of pushtimarg ("The way of grace") and a chronological account of each successive gosain from Vitthalnath to the current leadership of the sect. Mital lists the traditional "seven svarupas" and explains how according to sectarian legend each became established. Brajasthāna Vallabha Sampradāys Itihāsa is the only history of the cult extant outside of Yādunāth Vajaratna's

of the Sampradaya. Read by a continuing stream of devotees these tracts reinforce the image of doctrinal authority and monetary power of the gosains who write and publish them.

Similarly the production of a major school of art and the printing of numerous devotional tracts necessitates a broad financial base. This the Vallabha Sampradaya developed in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries as the gosains adeptly utilized their religious office to spread the propaganda of Sri Nathji in the palaces and courts. The pomp and ceremony of the deity easily appealed to rulers who were accustomed to perceiving gods and goddesses in their own image. Sri Nathji did not receive puja, the more common form of devotion. Rather, he could only receive darshan, a practice used in the palace as a way of extracting loyalty and service from the peasantry. It is no accident that the tutelary deity of Vallabha found a natural home among the nobility, steeped in the importance of image, and the power of symbols, for the manipulation of power has been a constant part of life in the Indian sub-continent for centuries. It still plays a major role

A History of the Sect of the Maharajas published in 1865. The following other publications of devotional presses associated with the Vallabha Sampradaya are of use to this dissertation and to the study of bhakti Sampradayas as a whole: Srī Nāthajī kī Prākatva Vārtā (Mathura: Shri Bajrang Pustakalaya, n.d.); Braj Bhusan Sharma, ed., Govindaswāmī Sāhityika Vislesana, Vārtā aur Pada Sangraha (Kankroli: Vi ya Vighag, V, 2008); Braj Bhusan Sharma, ed., Paramānanda Sāgara (Srī Paramānanda Dasa krt Pada Sangraha): Prastāvana-Paricāya-Vārtā aur Kāvya-Parampara Evam Bhāva Vislesana Sahit (Kankroli: Vidya Vibhag, V, 2019); Niranjan Dev Sharma, ed., Goswāmī Srī Giridharalāla Mahārāja ke 120 Vacanāmṛta (Mathura: Shri Bajrang Pustakalaya, n.d.); Kanthmani Shastri, Astachāp: V. 1697 kī Vārtā aur Bhāva Prakāsa (Prācīna Vārtā Rahasya, 2 Bhaga) (Kankroli: Vidya Vibhag, V. 2009); Harahari Nath Tandon, Vārtā Sāhitya (Aligarh: Bharat Prakashan Mandir, V. 2017).

in the ability of any religious or secular form of government to survive.²¹ For example, Rajput princes until 1947 continued to weigh themselves in gold as a visible statement to the peasantry of the bold economic power they controlled and hence their authority to rule.

The Vallabha Sampradaya, aware of the tactic of darshan, utilized it to the fullest possible advantage. In addition the goswamis, coupled economic power based on land control with the ritualistic power based on purity that is associated with the Indian tradition of "holy men." In so doing they manipulated not one but several forms of dominance. They inculcated ritualistic dominance, continuously nurtured by the expansion of the sect and the growing financial position of the tilkayats who in the process became land barons. They achieved economic dominance, controlling commerce, taxation and property in Nathdwara through the succession of farmans, nishans and sanads granted to the cult. They achieved cultural dominance by enhancing the position of Tailangana brahmins, of which they claimed descent,²² and by sponsoring art celebrating the lordship

21. Darshan has been a way of extending authority and credibility for centuries. Gandhi's march to the sea and almost ritualistic appearance in village after village depended on the same tradition. The continued practice of Prime Ministers of India of holding public audience is a repetition of the same process. See, Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, "Self-control and Political Potency: Gandhi's Asceticism," The American Scholar, 35 (1966):79-97, and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and Lloyd I. Rudolph, The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

22. For a discussion of "the ritualistic mobility among jati groups see: M. N. Srinivas, "Mobility in the Caste System," in Milton Singer and Bernard S. Cohn, eds., Structure and Change in Indian Society (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 189-201; and Owen M. Lynch, "The Politics of Untouchability--A Case from Agra, India," in Milton Singer and Bernard S. Cohn, eds., Structure and

of Sri Nathji. They achieved political dominance through their close association with Emperors and Maharanas. Their prosperity became a visible symbol of the unified and symbiotic, mutually supportive authority of "church" and state. Indeed, the more forms of dominance the Sampradaya enjoyed, the greater the possibility for acquiring more.²³

In a manner similar to the rigid control exerted by dominant jatis on life in village India so this bhakti sampradaya, obtained the fruits of patronage over several hundred years. The ritualistic position of the gosains, based on their association with the deity and hence their indisputable purity, when coupled with economic and political power created a superstructure that was not easily toppled. Indeed, only under extraordinary provocation could their leadership be challenged or refuted.

In the history of the Vallabha Sampradaya such a challenge only occurred as a direct result of the nineteenth century Hindu Renaissance. The Renaissance was an extraordinary event in itself as it sought the elimination of the very mechanism of economic power and dominance that had maintained temples for centuries. A variety of

Change in Indian Society (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 209-243. See also: D. A. Low, ed., Soundings in Modern South Asian History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968). In particular see Ravinder Kumar, "The Rise of the Rich Peasants in Western India" (pp. 25-59) and "The New Brahmins of Maharashtra" (pp. 95-131), both in D. A. Low, ed., Soundings in Modern South Asian History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

23. See, M. N. Srinivas, "The Dominant Caste in Rampura," American Anthropologist, 61 (1959):1-16.

reform movements called for a return to the source of scriptural authority and an end to what the reformers saw as a flagrant abuse of power.

As a result of this movement in mid-nineteenth century Bombay, which had become a center of Vallabhacharya activity in western India, the local population of worshipping Vaishnavas became incensed with the moral behavior of the gosains. Spurred on by the voices of prominent leaders of the community and Arya Samajists they called for an investigation and trial of the maharajas in question. The result, the now famous Bombay Libel Case, sought in keeping with the Hindu Renaissance to purge Hinduism from what the reformers saw as the licentious practices of the leaders of a morally debased sect.

Yet, in fact, the goswamis had acted in full accord with the established patterns of dominance and authority documented in the entrepreneurial behavior of Hindu temples for centuries. Under normal conditions their authority could never have been questioned. Indeed, it was only when a movement that had sparked criticism of traditional patterns of temple worship all over India reached Bombay, that their behavior was placed in doubt.

Recurrent evidence in the internal history of the Vallabha Sampradaya demonstrates the "politics of dominance," and illustrates the major theses of this dissertation that the manipulation of economic power and the maximization of political and cultural authority are inherent parts of the North Indian bhakti tradition. In several instances in the early history of the cult in Rajasthan acrimonious disputes broke out between leaders of the sect over control of the

principal images. The management of any of the seven svarupas, especially the murtis of Sri Nathji and Sri Dwarkadhishji were recognized as a measure of authority and control. Thus not only was the image a symbol of ritualistic, economic and cultural dominance, but also the goswami who gave it darshan and provided it a home could expect to manipulate and propagandize its devotees. Consequently, the descendents of Vitthalnath wrangled over the prizes.

For example, in 1669 A.D., Goswami Brajrayji is reported to have removed the image of Sri Dwarkadhishji from its haveli in Asotiya, a small village in the northern part of Mewar state, and to have proceeded with it to the Gujarat. Hoping to find sanctuary there and protection from his brothers, the gosain soon installed the image in a temple in Ahmadabad. However, two of his brothers, Gangavetji and Brajbhusanji, hearing of this assault on their authority, soon left Rajasthan in swift pursuit. Arriving in Ahmadabad and securing support for their cause they stormed the temple and, with the help of a company of soldiers, roused Brajrayji and recaptured the image. Eventually, Sri Dwarkadhishji was returned to Mewar where it was later installed in Kankroli, near Nathdwara. Gosain Brajrayji retired and disappeared into obscurity.

This incident, conceived in a bold and adventurous spirit, illustrates the degree of power and authority that the seven svarupas represented. Even if the god were obtained by deception or the use of force this measure of authority could not be diminished. What mattered more than the particular gosain who gave the murti darshan, or the manner of his transport from one place to another, was the ability of

the sevak (pujari) to lavish the god in elegant attire and install him in a setting suitable for his royal countenance.

Through the control of major images such as Sri Dwarkadishji, combined with the constant acquisition of land, wealth and power, the goswamis were able to raise the ritualistic status of the sampradaya. The sect attracted additional devotees seeking to elevate their own positions. They found refuge from the outside world in Vallabha's doctrines of pushtimarg and shuddadvaita. Mughal Emperors and Rajput princes, realizing the dynamics and potential usefulness of association with a strong bhakti sampradaya received the darshan of Sri Nathji themselves and in so doing took advantage of an established way of expanding their own power base. In seeking and obtaining their support the sampradaya established a process that was self perpetuating and self fulfilling.

CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW OF VALLABHACHARYA AND THE CULT OF THE MAHARAJAS

In the myths and legends surrounding Vallabhacharya and his son and successor, Vitthalnath, the Sampradaya legitimized its dominance and economic authority. Depending on their ancestral association with founder figure and first disciple, the gosains were perceived as the heirs to a hierarchical position of purity and control. As the administrators of the deity's realm and shrewd investors they manipulated this image to enhance their authority. In time, Vallabha became the archetypal link with Vaishnava tradition.

Vallabha's image was magnified as the sect developed into a more established sampradaya. In his lifetime he had performed no extraordinary miracles. He had neither remained celibate nor entered a monastic order. He had practiced no austerities nor fasted for the purpose of enlightenment. Rather, writing prolifically and publishing Sanskrit treatises on the major Upanishads and the Bhagavata Purana, he had married and adopted the pattern of life of a grihasta or householder. However, after his demise, Vallabha became associated with the expected pursuits of a holy man, conducting pilgrimages to all the great centers of Vaishnavism. His devotional acts were enveloped in

accretions of myth and legend that magnified his deeds.¹ The manner of his birth became identified with the intervention of

1. The process of enveloping a founder figure with myths of importance and even supernatural abilities is common in the History of Religions. Scholars have documented the manner in which denominations and sects seek to portray patriarchal figures in broad cultural terms magnifying their abilities and deeds, and the larger process of culture change. Anthropologists, for example, have talked about the stages of culture change and revitalization movements. See, Anthony F. C. Wallace, Culture and Personality (New York: Random House, 1970). However, the pioneer of the scientific study of myth in religious traditions is Rudolph Bultmann. Bultmann speaks of "demythologization" and searches for the kerygma or truth that lies behind accreted tradition. Bultmann's major works include: Kerygma and Myth (New York: Harper Torchbooks, revised edition, 1961); Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting, R. H. Fuller, translator (London: Colliers, 1964); Jesus Christ and Mythology (New York: Scribners, 1958). Bultmann approaches completed religious traditions, attempting to unravel the levels of myth that cloud the original kerygmatic event. Yet, the process through which a founder figure is encompassed in myth, while universally accepted, is rarely identified by name.

The study of comparative mythology has often used the word aetiology to explain part of the process. The behavioral sciences utilize a variation of the same term, etiology, in discussing causation, and the origins of observable phenomena. Aetiology is the association of broad cultural traditions with names or places, explaining the derivation of these names, practices or customs.

The myth making process is often aetiological. For example, the epithet acharya in Hinduism not only gives its bearer prestige but also describes the nature of the myths that the culture assigns to him. Accordingly, acharyas are enveloped in myths that describe their wisdom and authority, their pilgrimages and association with the Great Vedic Tradition. An aetiological myth in the Vallabhacharya tradition is the legend attached to the name Nathdwara ("portal of god") which was given to the small village of Sinhar after a cart bearing Sri Nathji miraculously stuck in the mud nearby. The members of the cult concluded that this extraordinary event indicated the god's desire to remain in Sinhar and therefore renamed the village Nathdwara.

Aetiology is only part of a total process which is also dependent on the historical and cultural dominance of a founder figure or sect whose traditions are accreted with "larger than life" characteristics. The myths that surround the mysterious figure Moses would not have been applied unless the cult of Yhwh was culturally dominant. The folk hero Krishna would not have been elevated to deity without the historical association with Vasudeva and Vishnu.

This total process can in a Bultmannian manner be identified as "mythologization." Mythologization is the aetiological association of culturally defined expressions of dominance through accreted layers of

deity.² He is seen to have debated the great scholars and theologians of his day.³ He was recognized as a great teacher.⁴ Finally,

stories, legends and other narratives with a founder figure or patriarch who is understood to be able to interpret divine will. Accordingly, mythologization usually involves an association of such persons with a theopany or theopanies lifting up their direct experience of ultimate reality and hence their ability to interpret it.

2. According to several early sectarian biographies (the most well known being Sri Vallabhacharitra written in the sixteenth century) Vallabha was born while his parents were en route from Benares to South India fleeing an impending Muslim invasion. Vallabha's father, Laxman Bhatt, was a religious man who the tradition says had completed many pilgrimages. His mother is described as the daughter of a Vijayanagar priest.

In the lunar month of Vaishakh, 1479 A.D., Vallabha's parents are said to have stopped in Chamajanna, central India. Yallamagaru, his mother, gave premature birth due to the rigorous and hurried trip. The infant was still born and was placed beneath a large Champa tree before the group departed the next day. However, Yallamagaru, unwilling to believe the infant dead persuaded the others to return to the place where the baby had been placed. There beneath the Champa tree the party found much to their surprise the child alive and miraculously surrounded by a protective fire keeping him from all danger.

This narrative, written in terms and symbols common to the cultural understanding of holy men in South Asia, has many parallels. The birth of the Tamil Alvars and even that of Krishna himself are described in similar ways. Even the Buddha, conceived in a forest and protected by deity, was conceived in a like manner.

3. Vallabha is according to tradition said to have been a participant in the great debates in Vijayanagar between the proponents of advaita and dvaita schools of philosophy.

4. The significance of Vallabha as a teacher is seen in an account compiled in V. 1679 (1623 A.D.). In the varta or story of the attraction of the famed poet Surdas to the way of pushtimarg, Goswami Hariray enhances Vallabha's authority. The account observes, "One day Sri Acaryaji Mahaprabhu (a title used for Vallabha--literally, 'His Grace, Great God') arrived from Arai to Braj at Gaughat in between Agra and Mathura. Sri Acaryaji Mahaprabhu halted on Gaughat. Having bathed (in the Yamuna) and having done the Sandhya (worship) (he) sat down for cooking. And a large Vaishnava group was with Sri Acaryaji Mahaprabhu. Then the servant (disciple) began to cook for the Lord.

"On Gaughat was the abode of Surdas. Sur is master, then he is a servant, then he is a godly (person). (He) used to sing well (and) was a talented (man). Therefore, many people became the disciples of Surdas. Sri Acaryaji Mahaprabhu arrived on Gaughat. Then, seeing

Vallabha was closely associated with deity which in the form of Sri Nathji now often directed his life.⁵ Even in death Vallabha was

(this) the disciple of Surdas said, 'Vallabha (text repeats the honorific title) has arrived here. He who has made great conquest of the South has won over all the pundits. He has negated the Maya philosophy in Benares and in the South and has established the way of bhakti, thus Sri Acaryaji Mahaprabhu has arrived.'

"Then, Surdas said in the company of his disciples, 'You go away; when Sri Acaryaji Mahaprabhu has finished his meal and rests comfortably then inform me. We will go to the darshan of Vallabha (text repeats honorific title.)' Surdas "Varta" (translated by the author), quoted in Shastri, Astachap, pp. 13-15.

In this and other Astachap texts Vallabha is described as a teacher of insight and ability; an orator and a scholar who defeated the proponents of maya in the Vijayanagar debates. He is a pujari, personally cooking the food offerings of his Lord. In short, he is a fitting recipient of darshan and is treated with the utmost of respect and honor.

5. A theopany widely reported in sectarian accounts is the discovery of the murti of Sri Nathji. Vallabha is reported to have discovered the image on Mount Govardhan several miles outside the small village of Gokul. The figure was buried beneath the surface and only an arm protruded. On the day of Vallabha's birth the face of the image is said to have appeared. It was subsequently fed milk by one of the cows of a near-by farmer, Sadupande. Sadupande continued to celebrate puja in this manner until Vallabhacharya's Braj pilgrimage which brought him into direct association with religious authority and the center of devotional Vaishnavism in North India.

According to the narratives after hearing Sri Nathji calling out for more milk Vallabha recognized the voice as belonging to Krishna and immediately began to worship the murti. A small temple was constructed on the place where it had been buried; in later years a larger edifice was erected in Mathura by one of Vallabha's converts.

Thus, the full appearance of Sri Nathji to Sadupande on the very day of Vallabha's birth is clearly intended to be taken as more than coincidence. Rather, it is implied in this series of events that Vallabha's birth, pilgrimages and trip to Mount Govardhan where the image was discovered had all been preordained. The significance of Vallabha's life as a holy man and a teacher is, then, found in the continuous, personal worship of this form of Krishna. Vallabha is understood as a sevak and pujari who is given the ability to interpret the divine will (see footnote 1).

portrayed as a holy man who according to his status entered the Ganges as his final act.⁶

Thus, Vallabha assumed the traditional positions of holy man (becoming closely associated with deity) acharya (taking numerous pilgrimages to established centers of Vaishnava learning), scholar (publishing Sanskrit treatises on important theological issues) and devotee. Completing the expected stages of Varnashramadharma Vallabha was recognized as the obedient servant of the Great Tradition of the Vedas.

The same process through which Vallabha's life was placed in a larger cultural context can also be seen in the evolution of the sampradaya itself. In keeping with Hindu tradition each Vaishnavite sect must find a larger, more comprehensive seat of authority to which it rightfully belongs. This practice has long been accepted as a way of elevating the status of a cult to conform with its expanding economic and cultural position. The identification of Vasudeva with Narayana and Vishnu, and the subsequent merger of Vasudeva-Krishna with the cowherd deity, Gopala-Krishna has been a documented part of Vaishnava

6. According to sectarian tradition after entering the final stage of Varnashramadharma Vallabha entered the Ganges in 1532 A.D. and died. A great fire is said to have risen from his body to heaven. Death much as birth is carefully enacted and clearly receives the full approval of Sri Nathji. As the Buddha took great care to complete his patinirvana (final enlightenment) in a manner fitting tradition, so Vallabha does the same, but instead finishing his life in keeping with the way of Varnashramadharma, the necessary and proper stages of a devotional life.

tradition.⁷ Now, in much the same manner, the Vallabha Sampradaya proclaimed that its founder figure was historically and theologically related to the cult of Vishnuswami.

Vishnuswami, as described in a late thirteenth century commentary, Bhaktamala,⁸ was an established Vaishnava leader who defended a theological system directly related to Vallabha's pushtimarg. Bhaktamala further describes a succession of Vishnuswami's later followers, each given full authority to proclaim themselves as his legitimate heir. These other acharyas were Jnandeva, Namdeva, Trilocana and finally, Vallabha.

While there is little historical evidence to show that Vishnuswami ever existed, the myths associated with his life and theology placed Vallabha and his cult in a broader context. These aetiological stories set the scriptural and theological authority for the doctrines of pushtimarg and shuddhadvaita. They placed Vallabha and his sect in the mainstream of Hindu philosophy and the historical bhakti movement. Anchoring ritualistic practices in a Great Tradition, they assured the acceptance of innovation and reform.

The spiricual heir to the position of acharya and defender of pushtimarg was Vallabha's son and first goswami of the sect, Vitthalnath. Vitthalnath is to the Vallabha Sampradaya what Asoka was to Buddhism. He established the sect's major geographical centers, spread its major doctrines, and most significantly interpreted this new religion to

7. See, R. G. Bhandarkar, Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems (Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1965).

8. Ibid., p. 77.

rulers and kings of the day thus increasing the sampradaya's membership, wealth and prestige.

Like Vallabha, Vitthalnath sought to establish himself as an acharya, holy man and scholar. He journeyed on major pilgrimages to defend this image, establishing temples and shrines wherever he went.⁹ He wrote numerous devotional and theological treatises including commentaries on his father's major works.¹⁰ He made sure that his authority to interpret the Bhagavata Purana would be seen as equal to that of Vallabha. But most significantly Vitthalnath carried the image of maharaj into the courts.¹¹

Vitthalnath repeatedly came into contact with the Mughal government in Agra. Numerous farmans, parwanas and sanads were issued in his name providing grazing land for his cattle and the protection of the empire for the sampradaya. Sectarian accounts report that Vitthalnath had several audiences with the Emperor Akbar. Further, devotional texts support the early association of Vitthalnath with a wide variety of

9. In V.S. 1600 Vitthalnath conducted the first of these pilgrimages. This was quickly followed by another in V.S. 1613. Thereafter in V.S. 1619, 1623 (from Mathura), 1631 (from Gokul), 1638 Vitthalnath journeyed to various locations, mostly in the Gujarat. In this time he established temples in Ahmadabad and Bombay and attracted numerous converts to the sect from the mercantile Vaishnava communities in the Gujarat. These followers later became a significant part of the sect's income through the taxation of the raw materials that formed the basis of their commerce.

10. Vitthalnath's major Sanskrit works are Vidvan Mandanam and Bhakti-Hetu-Nirnaya. See, Shah, Shri Vallabhacharya, p. 444.

11. Contacts with royalty began (according to Shastri's Kāṅkrolī-kā Itihāsa, p. 100) in V.S. 1618 (1554 A.D.).

Rajput nobility.¹² Perhaps the most significant account of this type is the encounter of the gosain with the Maharani Durgavati,¹³ a celebrated ruler who became known for her open defiance of the Mughal Empire.

Through these close associations with Mughal and Rajput aristocracy Vitthalnath received the darshan of princes and kings. Bringing the majesty and ceremony of his tutelary deity, Sri Nathji, into the courts he attracted the interest of persons who by virtue of their office insured the continued growth of the sect.

In keeping with his frequent association with royalty Vitthalnath designed the major temples of the sect (which he termed havelis) as palatial mansions or palaces. The haveli symbolically pointed to the regal splendor of the deity and simultaneously to the aristocratic position of the goswami. Serving as temple and residence for the heirs to the leadership of the sampradaya, the haveli became

12. On returning from a pilgrimage to Adel (or Arial) Vitthalnath is said to have arrived in a place identified as Bandhava (or Banda). Accompanied by his son Giridharlal he was invited to the darbar of Maharaja Ramchandra. Raja Ramchand was chief of Kalinjar in Bundelkhand. Maintaining an independent kingdom until 1569 A.D. when he surrendered to Akbar's repeated military advances, Ramchand could very likely have been a supporter of a growing Hindu sampradaya. References to his association with Vitthalnath are contained (in Hindi) in Shastri's Kānkrolī kā Itihāsa, p. 100.

13. The encounter between Vitthalnath and Durgavati is reported in several sectarian sources and acknowledged by historians as well. See, for example, Skelton, Rājāsthānī Temple Hangings, p. 14. R. C. Majumdar describes Durgavati, ". . . Durgavati (was) a Rajput lady of superb beauty and great valour. She gallantly opposed the imperialists but was defeated in a fight with them between Garah and Mandala (now in the Jubbulpore district). In the true Rajput spirit she preferred death to disgrace and committed suicide." R. C. Majumdar, An Advanced History of India (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1967), p. 14.

encrusted with exquisite decoration. Gold and silver were common accouterments of deity and at the same time provided an atmosphere which much like the secular palace of Rajput princes suggested opulence and authority.

By designing the haveli, propagating the office of goswami and affecting his own image as acharya, Vitthalnath began a tradition of religious and cultural dominance that continues to this day. The goswami became a living symbol of ritualistic and economic power as each successive gosain became identified as the personal sevak and pujari of one of the seven svarupas of Sri Nath.¹⁴ Through the continued acquisition of property for grazing lands and expansion of the havelis the gosains accrued economic power. Controlling taxation and rent they became "temple landlords."¹⁵

14. Vitthalnath had seven sons each of whom came to occupy a seat (gadi) of the sect. These seats became known as the "seven svarupas" (seven forms of Sri Nath) or the "seven houses" (grh.).

<u>Son's Name</u>	<u>Svarupa</u>	<u>Grh.</u>	<u>Location</u>
Giridhar ji	Sri Nath ji	1	Nathdwara
	Sri Navatitapriya ji	"	"
	Sri Mathuresh ji	"	Jatipura (Braj)
Govindray ji	Sri Vitthalnath ji	2	Nathdwara
Balkrshn ji	Sri Dvarikanath ji	3	Kankroli
Gokulnath ji	Sri Gokulnath ji	4	Gokul
Radhunath ji	Sri Gokulcandrama	5	Kamban (Rajasthan)
Yadunath ji	Sri Balkrshn ji	6	Surat (Gujarat)
Dhanshayam ji	Sri Madanmohan ji	7	Kamban

Mital, Brajasthāna Vallabha Sampradāya Itihāsa, p. 64. These seven seats were linked together by the relationships between the goswamis who were all descendents of Vitthalnath and by such practices as Annakut. Annakut was a major festival in the sect's ritualistic life that brought the seven svarupas together for a period of a few days.

15. The goswamis controlled their havelis and adjacent properties much as Theravada Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka have administered monastic lands. See, Dieter-Evers, Monks, Priests and Peasants. Both sangha and sampradaya acquired multiple forms of dominance, controlling numerous avenues of income.

Exerting economic, political and ritualistic influence over their devotees, the goswamis became removed from the day to day administration of the temples they owned.¹⁶ Such isolation is an established cultural mechanism in South Asian religion that allows sectarian leaders to maintain a high degree of visibility enhancing their ritualistic dominance based on the continued acquisition of purity through direct association with deity. The more mundane matters of the daily administration of temples and shrines, attending to the provision of food stuffs for the god's consumption, and regulating the tremendous flow of pilgrims and devotees who regularly attend the mandir are left to a subordinate official.¹⁷ In the case of the Vallabha Sampradaya the creation of the office of adhikara by Vitthalnath

16. This was accomplished through the creation of the office of temple manager, which the tradition reports was established by Vallabhacharya. This office was in the sect's unique vocabulary termed, adhikara. After establishing the temple of Sri Govardhannath, Vallabha designated Kṛṣṇdas, one of the eight Astachap poets, as an adhikara. The duties given the adhikara were: (1) Contacting members of the sect in different geographical areas and securing contributions from them for the continued growth of the cult. The use of a charismatic leader to fill this role is quite logical. (2) Supplying the temple with goods. Kṛṣṇdas is reported to have journeyed to Agra and Mathura to secure provisions for the Gokul temple. (3) Controlling all labor in the temple including the selection of priests. See, Golok Vasi Dvarika Das, ed., Goswāmī Hari Rāyaji Pranita Caurāsī Vaisnavana kī Vārtā (Tīna Janma kī Līlā Bhāvana Vālī) (Mathura: Shri Govardhan Granthmala Karyalaya, V. 2027), pp. 526-571.

17. The adhikara as designated by the Vallabha Sampradaya was also responsible for inter-communication between temples. This was not easily facilitated since the havelis of the sampradaya were constructed over a wide geographical area. Further, land owned by the sect was often in a variety of locations, sometimes miles from the haveli itself. The collection of revenues, secular of produce and general inspection of these other properties were time consuming tasks.

permitted the gosains to spend the bulk of their time conducting darshans and magnifying the role of religious figureheads who by virtue of their position are symbols of authority.

Accordingly, the gosains were able to maintain the image of holy men, participating in the visible manifestation of the seven forms of Sri Nathji which was very much a supernatural event for those devotees who were steeped in pushtimarg. They continued to associate their role with that of scholars, writing devotional tracts in the vernacular and distributing them among the worshipping population. Finally, they maintained the image of teacher and defender of tradition, taking pilgrimages much in the tradition of Vallabhacharya and Vitthalnath.

The goswamis in enhancing their role freely associated with heads of state. They became the regular recipients of Mughal madad-i-m'ash grants. They became part of the court life in Mewar, Kishangarh and Jaipur. They inspired whole schools of art which in addition to lifting up their image as the personal servants of god, spread the bhakti religion of pushtimarg throughout Rajasthan and the Gujarat. They substantially increased their property holdings becoming land barons controlling vast estates and directing the lives of countless tenants and subordinate officials.

None of this would have been possible without the inherited position of acharya, holy man, teacher and defender of tradition inspired by Vallabhacharya. The continued application of status based on this multiple image enabled the goswamis to gain entry into the palaces. Welcomed as literary men and devotees of a sectarian

tradition that had accrued enormous political and cultural power they were often seen as an economic boon to whatever area they inhabited. Princes and Maharajas, aware of the financial and political benefits of the bhakti movement, patronized the cult of the Maharajas as a way of increasing their own dominance.

The gosains became patriarchal figures. Their roles, much as Vallabhacarya and Vitthalnath before them, were enshrouded with accretions of myth and legend. Their importance was magnified. As caretakers of tradition they were seen as a natural part of a movement based on the constant and ever present intervention of deity in human affairs. The sampradaya they created, as a result of this cumulative process, began an unending period of expansion and growth.

CHAPTER 3

THE EVIDENCE FROM MUGHAL GRANTS 1577-1643 A.D.

After the demise of Vallabhacharya the goswamis sought fresh ways to establish their theological and cultural authority. In so doing they utilized Vitthalnath as a role model, both during his lifetime and long after his death. As Vitthalnath had established the office of gosain as a symbol of the continuing intercession of Krishna in human affairs, so each successive gosain enhanced the charismatic aura of the position. As Vitthalnath looked to Akbar for support so generations of Vaishnavite maharajas turned to the Mughal Empire seeking patronage. In sum, they began a process of magnification of tradition and enhancement of their economic and political status that continued for centuries. In order to achieve this remarkable end they sought, and received, a series of Mughal land grants issued not to some Vaishnavite unknown, but rather given in the name of Vitthalnath.¹

1. Vitthalnath died in 1585 A.D. Grants issued in his name begun in 1577 and continued through 1643 A.D., maintaining Vitthalnath's name as a symbol of authority and tradition. Such a practice of continuing the name of a charismatic figure long after his demise is common in the History of Religions. The Psalms of "David" in the Old Testament literature, the sayings attributed to Jesus in the New Testament, the hadiths of Muhammad all rely on the authority of a patriarchal figure after his death. In Hinduism the same process is a major part of the personal and cultic reverence for guru figures whose footprints are given darshan even if the teacher has long since died. The total process through which this occurs is much the same as that in which founder figures are elevated to semi-divine states. It is the "mythologization" of lesser traditions utilizing the names and

The Vallabha Sampradaya, then, became the recipient of eight Mughal land grants in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. These farmans, parwanas and sanads² gave the sect tax free use of land it had previously acquired, a share in local commerce, grazing rights for its cattle and perhaps most important the favor and patronage of the Mughal aristocracy.

The grants are an important source of information for the history of the Empire and show the manner in which a Hindu sampradaya could retain the patronage of the state in a Muslim dominated society. The documents follow the form and style of madad-i-ma'ash.³

attributes of charismatic figures as continuing symbols of cultural and religious dominance.

Further, since madad-i-ma'ash grants issued before 1690 were not transferrable the preservation of Vitthalnath's name enabled the Sampradaya to continue to receive gifts from the Mughal government long after the gosain's demise (see footnote 3). At the same time it reduced the possibility that disputes over succession to the Sampradaya's leadership, as were often the case, would stand in the way of additional patronage.

2. A farman was an order issued at the discretion of the Emperor. It was often followed by a parwana, a summary of the specific land assignment directing the proper officials to carry it out. The sanad was an order issued with the authority of the Empire but not necessarily by the Emperor himself.

The farmans, parwanas and sanads discussed here appear in Hindi in Shastri's Kānkrolī kā Itihāsa, Vol. II and in English paraphrase in The National Register of Private Records, No. 1, Part II. They are also discussed in Tod's Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan (all editions).

3. These documents like madad-i-ma'ash grants often have four component parts: (1) A statement of the conditions of the grant and the land assignment made. (2) A direction to the officers of the Empire to carry out the conditions of the grant. (3) An exhortation for loyalty and continued prayers for the duration of the Empire. (4) An implicit assumption contained in the language of the document that the recipient of the grant will live and work on the assigned land. This relatively simple pattern differs from jagirs and other military grants which

The use of the madad-i-ma'ash⁴ system often represented an attempt by the Mughal Empire to elicit the support of those religious and charismatic leaders with significant influence among the lower classes. Accordingly, Hindus and Muslims alike became recipients of

required service in the militia to compensate for the privileges and assignments of land granted.

However, in a reference to "a series of sanads of the reigns of Akbar and Shah Jahan, issued to a family of Hindu divines . . ." Irfan Habib discusses what appear to be the Vallabhacharya grants as a variant from the madad-i-ma'ash tradition. He observes, "There were certain grants, which were not in name madad-i-ma'ash but were in fact very similar. . . . we have a purely unconditional remission of revenue, which is illustrated by a series of sanads of the reigns of Akbar and Shah Jahan, issued to a family of Hindu divines in respect of two villages. The beneficiaries seem to have already held the land in their possession: they are in fact said to have purchased one of the villages from zamindars. The farmans exempted them from the revenue-demand and all other cesses, in language similar to that of the usual madad-i-ma'ash grants. A noteworthy difference, however, was the declaration that the grant was to be enjoyed not only by the first beneficiary but also by his descendents to come "for generation to generation." Irfan Habib, The Agrarian System of Mughal India (1556-1707) (London: Asia Publishing House, 1963), p. 397.

Habib's scholarship is thorough and well documented. Yet, his conclusions in this instance are subject to debate. For example, six Vallabhacharya grants issued before 1633 were not declared to be transferrable and in all respects fit the madad-i-ma'ash category. Further, the author's criteria for defining madad-i-ma'ash as non-hereditary rest upon a 1690 edict in which it was ruled that the grants could be passed on from father to son. But, there are very few madad-i-ma'ash grants extant that were issued before 1690. Hence, it is difficult to tell whether the edict simply legitimized previous practice or actively changed the structure of the madad-i-ma'ash system.

Hereafter, in consideration of this debate, the term madad-i-ma'ash (or in'am which Habib equates with madad-i-ma'ash) is used to identify those Vallabhacharya documents that are similar to this general tradition, recognizing that they may or may not be an unidentified variant.

4. For example, the Pindori Vaishnavas who supported some three hundred satellite shrines in North India became the recipients of madad-i-ma'ash grants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. See, B. N. Goswamy and J. S. Grewall, The Mughal and Sikh Rulers and the Vaisnavas of Pindori (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1969).

the grants. The important consideration for the Empire was not the particular doctrinal or theological position that a sect championed but rather the cultural and political power that its leadership actively maintained.

In return for the gift of madad-i-ma'ash all that was asked was the loyalty of the recipient and his prayers for the continued duration of the Empire. Such a demand, however, should not be underestimated. Grantees were often cultic figureheads or sectarian leaders with influence on thousands of devotees. The ability of the government to gather the loyalty of such sizeable portions of the population cannot be overlooked.

In the case of the sufi, in'am⁵ grants influenced the support of members of large dargahs:

By securing the loyalty of an elite group considered to wield special influence among the lower population, the government probably hoped to deepen the roots of its own authority throughout the kingdom. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the usual Sufis who received in'am grants were the attendants and leaders of the larger dargahs, to which thousands of devotees thronged each week. It was therefore at least as much the institution of the dargah as it was individual sufis that the government wished to support.⁶

The state support of religious institutions was a practical way of maintaining both communication with and control over an often unsettled population holding conflicting beliefs and exhibiting mutual mistrust.

In the case of sufis, the use of madad-i-ma'ash provided a way of

5. Madad-i-ma'ash grants were later referred to as in'am. See, Habib, The Agrarian System of Mughal India, p. 288.

6. R. M. Eaton, "The Court and the Dargah in the 17th Century Deccan," Indian Economic and Social History Review, 10 (1973):50-63.

capturing the favor of a large segment of the Muslim masses who looked to these leaders for spiritual authority. In sum, these farmans and parwanas were a valuable tool that while steeped in regulation and compartmentalization,⁷ provided the Emperor with a way of exercising his political dominance over a section of the population that was often viewed as reactionary and unpredictable.

Akbar issued the first Mughal grant to Vitthalray in September 1577:

शाही फरमान १...गोकुल में निवास करने के बावत ।

जलालुद्दीन महम्मद अकबर बादशाह गाजी का फरमान, वह स्वयं स्वतन्त्र है । विट्ठलदास जो निःशंक

हमारा भला चाहनेवाले हैं और जो कस्बा गोकुल में रहते हैं उनको और उनके साथियों को और नौकर-चाकरों को, इस समस्त दुनिया का रत्न बादशाह और दूसरे राज्य-कर्मचारी किसी प्रकार सतावेंगे नहीं, और उनके पास से किसी प्रकार की कोई चीज माँगेँगे नहीं । इनको अपने स्थान में अपनी जगह में निश्चिन्त रहने देना कि जिससे यह हमारी हमेशा बढ़नेवाली कीर्ति और उन्नति के लिये सदा ईश्वर से शुभ कामना प्रकट करते रहें । यह जो लेख लिखा गया है उसके मुताबिक राज्य-कर्मचारियों को बर्ताव करना चाहिये, इसके विरुद्ध किसी प्रकार का बर्ताव करना नहीं ।

लिखा गया, २ जमादी महीना की २६ तारीख हि० सन् ९८५, शुक्रवार १३ वीं सितम्बर ई० सन् १५७७, वि० सं० १६३४ ।

7. The administrative machinery of the madad-i-ma'ash system involved both provincial and imperial officials. No farman was ever issued without specific recommendation from a provincial Sadr, an administrative officer, who after ascertaining that a person or persons in his jurisdiction deserved madad-i-ma'ash, informed the imperial office. The details of the subsequent process are outlined by Sheikh Abdur-Rashid in "Madad-i-ma'ash Grants Under the Mughals," Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society, 9 (1961):98-108.

Royal Farman One . . . in connection with the inhabitants of Gokul. The farman of the great hero Jalaludhin Muhammad Akbar Badshah, he is sovereign.

Badshah the protector of the entire world and other government officials will not bother Vithaldas, who undoubtedly wishes us well and who lives in the small town of Gokul, nor his companions and servants; to him and to his retinue, he will not demand anything from them. Let them stay worry free in their own place so that he continuously prays to God for our ever-increasing fame and progress.

This is the order that has been written, government officials must follow what is written in this document.

Written in the second month, the 23rd day, the year 985, Sukravar 13 of September, the Christian year 1577, Vikram Samvat 1634.⁸

This farman is similar to other madad-i-ma'ash grants of the period. It is issued directly to the gosain. Often madad-i-ma'ash grants were given to the heads of religious institutions with no mention of the cult that supported them. In this case the sect is referred to by references to "the inhabitants of Gokul" and "Vitthaldas and his retinue."⁹ Further, the document commands the officials of the empire to obey; undoubtedly a parwana would be issued later naming these administrators who would see that the instructions of the farman were carried out.

However, the document does stand out because of its specific hope that Vitthaldas, a Hindu acharya, would pray for the empire and its ruler, Akbar Badshah. Indeed, the language of the grant suggests

8. Shastri, Kānkrolī kā Itihāsa. The early Mughal farmans to the sect are reproduced on pages 104 and 105 of this work.

9. The name Vitthaldas is used in this farman to refer to Vitthalray or Vitthalnath.

that the Emperor wished that Vitthaldas remain "worry free" both in terms of taxation and requests from government officials so that he might "pray to God for our ever increasing fame and progress." There is little doubt that Akbar had become enamored with the tenets of pushtimarg and saw the prayers of the Vallabhacharya maharajas as a way of gaining favor with God. Later grants issued in the name of other members of the royal family support the conclusion that Vitthaldas had indeed carried the religion of Sri Nathji to the Mughal courts where as sectarian legend concludes the acharya had several audiences with Akbar.

While the grant does not give the sampradaya land, it grants the protection of the empire to properties that the cult had clearly already owned. Therefore, Vitthaldas and his retinue were not able, in lieu of the empire, to collect the revenue from the land and to keep it.

The specific circumstances surrounding the issue of the first farman are unusual. While Akbar most certainly expressed a personal interest in pushtimarg¹⁰ there were also historical, political and social conditions that made a madad-i-ma'ash grant to a Hindu cult in Mathura highly advisable and significant in 1577.

The Vallabha Sampradaya was situated in Gokul, a small village adjacent to the larger city of Mathura (see Figures 1 and 2). Mathura was a holy city with a large resident Vaishnavite population and a surging annual influx of pilgrims who visited the places the Bhagavata Purana had made famous. The possibility of an open revolt by such a Hindu population in a Muslim empire could not be ignored by any ruler.

10. Support for this argument is given by Parekh in Shri Vallabhacharya, Life, Teachings and Movement, p. 165.



Figure 1. Mathura (Detail) -- Source: Growse, Mathura.

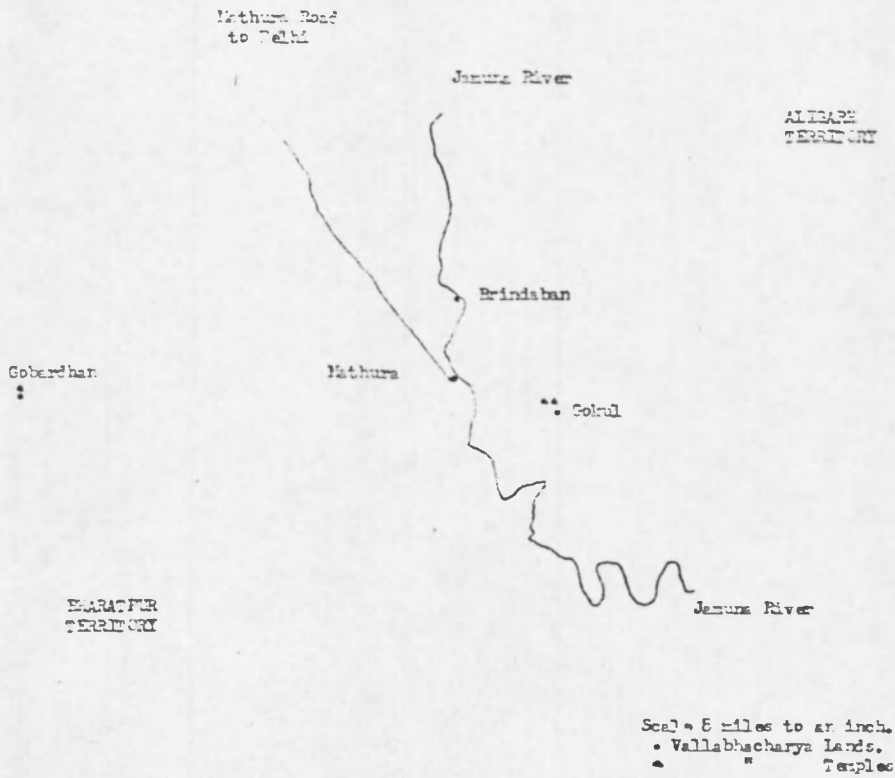


Figure 2. The Vallabha Sampradaya in the Mathura Region (1577)

Mathura's strategic position between the larger city of Delhi and the capital, Agra, made appeasement of its population essential. Hence, Akbar is often reported to have made pilgrimages to the shrines and temples of Mathura and Brindaban. While such pilgrimages may have had religious and devotional components given the Emperor's eclectic nature, the pragmatic realization that such visible devotion to Hindu religious traditions in the center of Braj--the very heart of Krishna bhakti--had political implications, cannot be ignored. In the act of receiving darshan the Emperor assured that the symbols of his secular authority would be enhanced and magnified by subjects who now saw him in a new way as both ruler and bhakta. In short, the Emperor forged a link between Mughal authority and Hinduism.

Four months before a series of events unsettled the Hindu population in Mathura. Al Badāonī's commentary Muntakhabu-T-Tawarīkh records that,

When the Emperor (Akbar) halted at Fathpur, Qazi Abdu-r-Rahim the Qazi of Mathura laid a complaint before the Shaikh, to the effect that a wealthy and stiff-necked brahmin of that place had carried off the materials which he, the Qazi had collected for the construction of a masjid and had built of them an idol-temple, and that, when the Qazi had attempted to prevent him, he had, in the presence of witnesses, opened his foul mouth to curse the prophet (on whom be peace), and had shown his contempt for Muslims in various other ways. When the brahmin was called on to appear, he also obeyed the Shaikh's summons.¹¹

11. Sir Wolseley Haig, ed. and trans., Muntakhabu-T-Tawarīkh by 'Abdu-L-Qādir Ibn-I-Muluk Shāh known as Al-Badāonī, Vol. III, Revised Bramhadeva Prasad Ambeshthya (Patna: Patna Academica Asiatica, 1973), p. 128.

Al-Badā'oni¹² goes on to discuss the ensuing debate within the ulama concerning suitable punishment for the brahmin. The court was apparently divided between those demanding death and those calling for public mockery by parading the brahmin on the back of an ass. The commentary continues:

The Shaikh required the Emperor's sanction to the execution of the brahmin, but, notwithstanding his importunity, no open sanction was given, and the Emperor said in private, "Punishments for offenses against the holy law are in the hands of you, the Ulama, what do you require of me?" The brahmin and the ladies of the Imperial haram busied themselves in interceding for this release but the Shaikh's known opinions stood in the way. At last, when the Shaikh's importunity exceeded all bounds, the Emperor said, "You have received your answer, it is that which I have already given you." No sooner had the Shaikh reached his lodging than he issued orders for the execution of the Brahmin.¹³

This incident caused ripples throughout the Mughal bureaucracy. The unwillingness of the Emperor and the ulama to become involved in a decision to execute a Mathura brahmin clearly shows the potential danger and threat to the stability between the Muslim and Hindu populations that these events posed. The Shaikh on whose orders the execution was finally carried out lost both prestige and power.

12. Al-Badā'oni was a well known opponent of Akbar and often criticized the Emperor for his liberal and eclectic religious policies. While recognized as an accurate observer of court life, Al-Badā'oni's bias must also be taken into account. Accordingly, in this narrative he uses the incident of the encounter of the Qazi and the brahmin to explain the downfall of Shaikh 'Abu-'u-Nabi and the indecision of Akbar. In discussing Al-Badā'oni's narrative, editor Sir Wolseley Haig concludes (pp. 127, 128) that the Emperor had been displeased with the Shaikh for some time. See also, S. M. Ikram, Muslim Civilization in India, Ainslie T. Embrce, ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 158. Ikram cites this incident and uses it to explain court politics in 1577.

13. Haig, Muntakhabu-T-Tawarikh, pp. 127, 128.

Al-Badāonī reports that after censure by Akbar he ". . . withdrew himself from company and avoided it, concerning himself principally with his own claims to superiority and the repudiation of former decisions in legal matters, whether modern or ancient. He never went to Court."¹⁴ The Shaikh died some six years later having lived the remainder of his life in self-imposed exile.

The execution of a brahmin upon orders of the Mughal governor of much of Brajasthan presumably caused unrest among the Hindu population in Mathura. Indeed, it could have caused an open revolt. Hence, in September of the same year, some four months after this incident, Akbar issued a madad-i-ma'ash grant to a major Hindu Sampradaya in Mathura. There can be little doubt that the timing of the farman was not an accident. Madad-i-ma'ash was a tool that could be used at the Emperor's discretion. Surely this was a time when it became an invaluable way of disassociating the Empire from a politically unwise and dangerous situation.

Akbar issued a second grant to Vitthalray on March 9, 1581:

शाही फरमान २—(गायें चराने बाबत) ।

जलालुद्दीन महम्मद अकबर बादशाह गाजी का फरमान, वह स्वयं स्वतन्त्र है, ईश्वर महान् है ।

इस समय हुकुम किया गया है कि—हमारा निःशंक भला चाहनेवाले, पवित्र जनोई पहिरनेवाले विठ्ठलराय की गायें जहाँ हों वहाँ चरने दी जावें । खालसा अथवा जागीर किसी भी प्रकार की जमीन में उसको कोई भी किसी प्रकार का कष्ट न पहुँचावे, और न हैरान करे, उन्हें चरने दिया जावे । विठ्ठलराय इस बाबत गोकुल में निश्चिन्त होकर रहै । इस हुकुम के विरुद्ध कोई बर्ताव न करे क्योंकि सभी इस हुकुम के अनुसार चलने और इसको काम में लाने के लिये बँधे हुए हैं ।

लिखा गया, माह सफ़र की तारीख ३ हि० सन् ९८६, गुरुवार ६ मार्च ई० सन् १५८१, वि० सं० १६३८ ।

Royal Farman 2--(in connection with cow grazing)

The great farman of the Emperor Jalaludhin Mohammad Akbar, he is sovereign, God is great.

This time the order has been given that wherever the cows of Vitthalray, the doubtless well wisher, the wearer of the sacred thread, may be there they should be allowed to graze. In any kind of land Khalsa or Jagir, anyone should not cause them distress, and should not bother them; they should be allowed to graze. In connection with this Vitthalray in Gokul should live free from worry. No one should act against this order because all are obliged to follow this order and execute it.

This has been written, in the third month of the journey, the year 989, Thursday 9, the Christian year 1581, Vikram Samvat 1638.¹⁵

The second grant appears twelve years after the first. Unlike the former it does not refer to any specific tract of land or to any particular village. Rather, the document simply states that the cows of Vitthalnath are free to graze in any location.

However, beneath the surface of what at first appears to be a rather insignificant document is an important consideration. That is, the implication that wherever the cows of Vitthalray go presumably he has the authority to go as well. By extension this authority applies to the sect itself.¹⁶ The result of this unlimited grazing privilege is the assurance that wherever the sampradaya wished to proselytize or spread its doctrine, it would be given the full protection of the Empire. The use of cattle for profit as part of such a venture had

15. Shastri, Kānkrolī kā Itihāsa, p. 105.

16. While the devotees of the Vallabha Sampradaya are rarely referred to by name in the Mughal documents there is often a reference (as for example in the 1577 document) to the "retinue" of Vitthalray. At other times they are simply referred to as the "inhabitants of Gokul."

enormous cultural power. In a part of North India recognized as the very homeland of Krishna who incarnated himself as a whole cow herd, chased after gopis and distributed his authority among Vaishnavite goswamis (literally, a "lord of cows"), the presence of the cattle of a bhakti sect must have had a compelling power.

Even khalsa and jagir properties are not excluded from the order. Express permission is given to tend cattle in the most prestigious of lands, whether they be fields and villages granted to the nobility in exchange for military service (jagirs) or properties owned by the state (khalsa). The propagation of the Vallabhacharya faith and the expansion of its herds are not prohibited anywhere.

In sum, by granting a wealthy landowner grazing rights for his cattle and protection for his followers, the Empire committed itself to supporting a Vaishnavite bhakti sect. The commitment was unconditional and open-ended. In an area populated with dozens of competing bhakti sampradayas such a governmental "license" was not only a mark of approval but a visible symbol of power and authority¹⁷ to the sect that received it.

A third grant followed on October 8, 1581. Like those before it, it was issued to Vitthalray, but the grantor was Hamida Banu, Akbar's mother:

17. The Vallabha Sampradaya is often reputed to have been in competition with adherents of the Chaitanya sect in the Mathura region. Some Vallabhacharya devotees even allege that the two seers had met. While this entire matter is speculative it is reasonable to assume that in a part of North India as steeped in Krishna lore as Mathura and with the proliferation of Vaishnava cults that thronged the birthplace of the "dark god," competition was very real.

शाही फरमान ३—अ—(गायें चराने बाबत)

हमीदा बानुबेगम का हुकुम । वह स्वयं महान् है । (हमीदा बानु अली अकबर की पुत्री ।)

शाहनशाहत की राजधानी आगरा की सरकार में आये हुए महावन के करोड़ी हुशवार अमलदारों और दूसरों को मालूम हो कि महान् और न्यायी शाहनशाह के फरमान के मुताबिक निःशंक भल चाहनेवाले, पवित्र जनोई पहिरनेवाले विठ्ठलेशराय की गायों को खालसा अथवा जागीर की किसी भी जमीन में जहाँ होय वहाँ दुखी नहीं करनी और न चरने से रोकनी । विठ्ठलराय इस बाबत निश्चिन्त रहे । सबकी फरज है कि वह इस हुकुम के मुताबिक बर्ताव करे और इसके विरुद्ध न चले ।

लिखा गया, रमजान उलमुबारक माह की १० तारीख हि० सन् ९८६, रविवार ता० ८ अक्टूबर ई० सन् १५८१, वि० सं० १६३८ ।

Royal Farman 3a (in connection with cow grazing). The order of Hamida Banu. She is eminent.

Let it be known to the bright administrators of Mahavan that have entered into the government of Agra the capital of the Empire, and also to others, according to the farman of the great and just Emperor--the cows of Vitthalray, the wearer of the sacred thread, that wherever Vitthalray's cows may be in any kind of land Khalsa or Jagir, there they may not be restricted from grazing and not bothered. In connection with this matter Vitthalray shall live free from worry. All officials are obliged to follow this order and not to act against it.

This is written on the 10th day of the month of Ramazan the year 989, Sunday October 8, the Christian year 1581, Vikram Samvat 1638.¹⁸

18. Shastri, Kankrolī kā Itihāsa, p. 105.

The farman was followed several months later by a parwana:

शाही फरमान ३—आ—(गायें चराने बावत ।)

खान बहादुर सिपहसालार खानखानान अकबर शाह के चेला का फरमान ।

ओड परगना के वर्तमान और भविष्य के अमलदारों को मालूम हो कि सावी बगैरह गामों में गाय और बैलों की चरागाह है, इससे उस पर निगरानी रखने और कर लेने अथवा गायों की गिनती करने के बहाने कोई भी उन्हें अटकावे नहीं हैरान करे नहीं । कारण यह कि यह गाम समझ-सोचकर बचीस किया गया है । इस बड़ी आज्ञा के मुताबिक सबको बर्तना चाहिये और हर साल नया परवाना नहीं माँगना चाहिये । लिखा गया रोज आज़र सन् ३३ तारीख ११ मोहर अउलहराम माह दि० सन् ९९७, ता० १ दिसम्बर ई० सन् १५८८, वि० सं० १६४५ ।

Royal Farman 3 -ā- (in connection with the grazing of cows).

The farman of the disciple of Akbar, Commander Bahadur Khan.

It should be known to present and future officials of the pargana of Od that in Savi and other villages there is a pasture for cows and oxen, therefore no one should obstruct them and harass them on the pretext of supervising, taxation or counting. The reason is that this village has wisely been made a grant. According to this great order all must behave and each year a new parwana must not be demanded.

Written on the 33rd day of the 11th month of Al Haram, the year 997, 1 December of the Christian year 1588, Vikram Samvat 1645.¹⁹

The third Mughal farman encompasses two documents (a and ā) issued two months apart. Each reaffirms the right of Vitthalray to graze his cows on any kind of land. The former, a farman, is uniquely

19. Ibid.

issued in the name of another member of the royal family, Hamida Banu. The latter, a parwana, is given in the name of a military commander, the official whose duty it was to see that the farman that preceded it was carried out.

Several possible reasons can be advanced to explain Hamida Banu's name on the farman. First, this may be an indication that the royal family was moved by the Vallabhacharya faith and sought to support the sect--an argument that the devotees of the cult would readily accept. Or, secondly, it may indicate a desire on the part of the Empire to reaffirm the issue of the earlier grant (as was often the case with madad-i-ma'ash grants) in a way that suggested the widest possible support. The latter argument is made plausible by the obvious repetition of language in the parwana. Except for more detailed information usually supplied in parwanas, this document states very little that is new, except for the name of Hamida Banu. The total effect of farman and parwana combined is a proclamation of broad based support for Vitthalray.

The potential economic benefit to the Vallabha Sampradaya (that could be) derived from these documents should not be overlooked. Indeed, with unlimited grazing rights a large herd of cows could easily be sustained. Clearly in an agricultural economy where the cow was highly prized for its milk production and for its other by-products (including dung for fuel and cleaning, urine for use as a constituent part of panhcagavya in many Hindu samskaras, and ghee or clarified butter used in most forms of puja) the cow was a measure of great wealth. Further, in an area of North India steeped in the legends and lore of Krishna

who both tended cows and chased after gopis, the cultural and religious importance of the cow is great. Certainly any landowner and especially one who was revered as the charismatic head of a major Vaishnavite sampradaya would accrue both increased prestige and status from a large herd.

The second and third Mughal farmans were followed by a series of two others in 1593. While these later documents are not available in their original forms outside of strictly guarded private collections controlled by the current tilkayat (gosain) of Nathdwara, descriptions of them can be obtained from The National Register of Private Records.

By giving Vitthalray increased control of valuable grazing land and hence of the local agricultural economy these documents build on the earlier grants. They also allow the expansion of temples already constructed. The first of the 1593 grants was issued on May 31:

From Emperor Akbar to Gosain Vitthalray. Informs that the land purchased by Vitthalray from the owners in Mauza Jatipura and situated in the pargana near Govardhannath temple, where he intends to build garden, cow sheds and karkhanas, is rent free and that all officers have been instructed to take notice of it.²⁰

Like the preceding farmans this document indicates that the land in question had already been acquired by Vitthalray. This property, in the mauza or outskirts of Jatipura was situated near the Govardhannath temple which evidently by this time had become prestigious. Thus, the farman indicates that these lands, now rent free to the gosain, were to

20. The National Register of Private Records, No. 1, Part II, #792.

be utilized for the construction of additional cow sheds, gardens and karkhanas.

This farman was immediately followed by another issued on 5 June of that same year: "From Emperor Akbar to Gosain Vitthalray. Regarding grant of the Mauza of Gokul together with the Guzar Ghat to Gosain Vitthalray, tax free in perpetuity to meet the expenses of the Thakurdwara; all the officers were instructed to take notice of it."²¹ This farman is more specific than its predecessors about the actual land in Gokul that is owned outright by the Vallabha Sampradaya through the descendants of Vallabhacharya. Thus, not only are grazing rights given anywhere near Gokul but now actual sections of the town are granted. Further, this document unlike the others indicates that these places are given to the gosain "in perpetuity."²²

The 1593 series of farmans was followed by three others between 1633 and 1643 A.D. all issued by Shah Jahan. After the transition in government from Akbar to Shah Jahan the basic support given the Vallabha Sampradaya was renewed. However, a notable change also occurred, for the first time extending the authority of the tax

21. The National Register of Private Records, No. 1, Part II, #794.

22. All madad-i-ma'ash grants were subject to the periodic renewal of the Emperor. They were valuable political tools because of this fact which Empire could use to sustain the loyalty of any individual or group who received them. The phrase "in perpetuity" showed the interest of the Emperor to keep nourishing the interests of the Vallabhacharya gosains. However, it is important to note that all of these farmans and parwanas were eventually renewed and subject to the same conditions as madad-i-ma'ash grants that might not have contained the phrase "in perpetuity."

exemption, the rent free use of land and the ownership of the property itself to the descendants of Vitthalray.

The first of these farmans was issued on October 9, 1633²³ and is almost a duplicate of the earlier document of May 31, 1593. It was followed by a second grant issued on the same date. This additional farman, citing a precedent in "ancient times" makes the gift hereditary: "From Emperor Shah Jahan to Gosain Vitthalray. The Mauza (outskirts or neighborhood) of Gokul has been granted free of tax from ancient times to the children of Vitthalray to cover the expenses of Thakurdwara; instructs all officers not to alter or change this arrangement."²⁴ Since the authority of the new tradition is claimed to lie in the past it cannot be contested. The goswamis, heir to the theological and ritualistic authority of Vallabhacharya, now in a similar manner hold title to a secular office--land baron and thakur. Neither role can be challenged. Both are rooted in a magnified past tradition and remain totally beyond reproach.

Finally, this series of documents concludes with the farman of 1643. As a continuation of the earlier support given the sampradaya by Shah Jahan this grant re-states the Emperor's basic assumptions: "From Emperor Shah Jahan to Gosain Vitthalray. Declaring that Vitthalray is one of the well wishers of the Mughal Kingdom, and a resident of Gokul; instructs all the officers that no one should molest

23. The National Register of Private Records, No. 1, Part II, #795.

24. Ibid., #796.

or disturb him and his property."²⁵ Madad-i-ma'ash grants could be rescinded or renewed at any time. The periodic re-statement of the terms of the original documents given by Akbar expresses both a continued interest of the Empire in the sect, and a re-affirmation of the Emperor's absolute authority.

While the later farmans and parwanas issued to the Vallabha Sampradaya in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are beyond the period of study of this dissertation some knowledge of them is valuable to any attempt to appreciate the full extent of the patronage ultimately afforded the cult by the Empire. These additional documents show the natural escalation of the support given the sect and the establishment of the descendents of Vitthalray as landowners in their own right.

In the early Spring of 1658 Shah Jahan issued two farmans to the Vallabha Sampradaya:

Farman 13 March, 1658. From Emperor Shah Jahan to the temple authorities of Goyardhannath. Informing that the cows belonging to the temple of Govardhannath in village Gopalpur are allowed to graze on the land in villages Bachhagaon and Bachha; instructs all the officers that this should not be prohibited on the ground of grazing fees.²⁶

Farman 30 April, 1658. From Emperor Shah Jahan to Gosain Girdharilal. Regarding grant of Pargana of Mahaban to Girdharilal and his children by way of charity; instructs all the officers to take notice of it.²⁷

25. Ibid., #797.

26. Ibid., #801.

27. Ibid., #802.

These two farmans are particularly significant as they establish the Vallabha Sampradaya as a major landowner and controller of desirable grazing property near Mathura.

The earlier of these documents extends the grazing rights of the Sampradaya's cows from the village of Gopalpur some eight miles from Mathura²⁸ to the villages of Bachha and Bachhagaon. Bachhagaon is described as a large area with significant grazing lands. By 1880, Bachhagaon had come to include 3,694 acres²⁹ and was widely recognized as a place where Krishna had sported.³⁰ Evidently the importance of the town to the Krishna cult was not overlooked, as by 1880 some forty-five small temples had been erected there.³¹

Even though Bachhagaon and its environs were probably smaller in the mid-seventeenth century, it was undoubtedly even then a valuable tract of land. For the Vallabha Sampradaya to have been granted grazing rights on this property and hence the right to pursue the propagation of the Vallabhacharya faith in an area attractive to Vaisnavite pilgrims and devotees alike would certainly have been crucial to the expansion of the cult.

The second farman is even more important than the first. Granted to Gosain Girdharilal, Vitthalray's grandson, this document

28. See, Growse, Mathura, p. 275. Growse reports that by 1880 Gopalpur encompassed 208 acres.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 383.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*

authorizes the gift of the pargana of Mahaban to the Gosain and to his children.

Mahaban was and is one of the most important districts in the Mathura area: "Mahaban is still a pargana of the district and in 1556 comprised an area of 290,703 bighas assessed to a revenue of 6,784,780 dams; while it furnished a force of 2,000 infantry and 200 horse. It probably included a portion of the present Tahsil of Sadabad, the rest of which fell within the pargana of Jalesar."³² This district (see Figure 3) was one of six mahals in the sarkar of Agra as designated by Akbar. Of these six mahals Mahaban was one of the largest.

Much of Mahaban district still borders on the Jumuna river; presumably in 1556 this was a large percentage of the total acreage as well. In 1901 only 7.93 per cent of the total district was uncultivable; the land is said to provide some of the best grazing in any of the areas adjacent to Mathura.³³ It is highly desirable property including in 1908 some twenty-two market places.³⁴ Of even greater significance is the fact that this pargana encompasses the village of Gokul--the original cite settled by Vallabhacharya. Gokul, literally meaning "cowpen," is central to the Krishna cult as a place where the deity often spent much time.

32. D. L. Drake-Brockman, Muttra (sic.): A Gazetteer Being Volume VII of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (Allahabad: Government Press, 1911), p. 192.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.



Figure 3. The Vallabha Sampradaya in the Mathura Region (1658)

Hence, for the Vallabha Sampradaya to control not only Gokul but the very district in which the village was located shows an increased ability of the sect to command the interest and the patronage of the crown. It is no accident that the sect furthered its economic position by the maintenance of large cow herds and that it chose to expand its interests in one of the most desirable grazing areas near Mathura. Thus by 1658 not only were Vallabhacharya cattle allowed to graze any place, as dictated in earlier farmans, but now they were specifically authorized to utilize the lands of Bachha and Bachhagaon and the entire pargana of Mahaban, which the gosains now owned tax free and outright. These provisions were, as before, specified to apply to the current gosain and to his children.

These later grants also indicate that the Vallabha Sampradaya received some income from the markets in the parganas it controlled. This is verified by the parwana of 7 March 1704: "From Mukramat Khan to Gosain Girdharilal. Regarding grant of grain market (Mandvi) of Mauza Gokul to Gosain Girdharilal; instructs all the officers to take notice of it."³⁵ By the time of this farman the Sampradaya had not only expanded its ownership of primary grazing properties but had ventured into direct control of major sources of grain production and therefore of a significant aspect of the local agricultural economy.

Figure 3 shows the land controlled by the Vallabhacharya gosains in the late seventeenth century. Whereas a century prior they had only retained the small village of Gokul, now they exerted a dominant

35. The National Register of Private Records, No. 1, Part II, #799.

influence in the entire pargana of Mahaban. Mahaban encompassed both extensive grazing lands and a strong Hindu population. The district was also militarily important, providing the Empire with some 2000 infantry and 200 horse.³⁶ Further, it yielded a sizeable tax revenue.

The control of the gosains here was absolute, both economically and culturally. The maharajas accrued the taxes and rent from tenant farmers. They dominated the socioreligious environment, maintaining their authoritarian image as the keepers and defenders of tradition. They managed large herds of cattle and directly influenced local commerce. All of this was enforced in a cumulative pattern of constant acquisition of multiple forms of power and prestige. Indeed, as late as the nineteenth century Growse reported that the principal proprietor of the area was still a descendent of Vallabhacharya, and the resident maharaj.³⁷

The elevation of the descendents of Vallabhacharya to this position was achieved through a process in which madad-i-ma'ash grants, intended for use by each successive Mughal Emperor over a limited period of time, were issued "in perpetuity."³⁸ Supporting a bhakti sampradaya for almost two centuries the flow of farmans, parwanas and sanads continued unabated until the wane of the eighteenth century and the diminution of the Empire. Each successive Emperor from Akbar (1577) to

36. Ibid.

37. Growse, Mathura, p. 275.

38. As early as 1588 (Royal farman 3a) the Mughal grants indicated the desire of the Empire to continue the imperial support of the sect. The usual demand that the parwana be re-issued each year was waived.

Shah Alam (1768)³⁹ continued the patronage enhancing the goswamis' economic authority and expanding the properties they controlled.

As the recipients of this continuing series of madad-i-ma'ash grants, the Vallabhacharya gosains were only asked to pray for the Emperor and to wish him well. While this phrase is common to all Mughal grants of the period it has special significance when applied to the leaders of a Hindu Vaishnavite sampradaya. Such a request to pray for the highest secular authority in the land, was a mark of distinction and honor. As spiritual supporters of the Emperor the gosains, then, held immeasurable control over their own devotees who looked to both secular and sacred forms of authority. To give Sri Nathji darshan was to support the ability of the goswamis to continue their prayers for the Emperor. Hence, the stability of the haveli was also a measure of the strength of the government. The key to all of this was the maharaj who, as the visible symbol of the human encounter with the lord Krishna, was the proprietor of tradition and the outward sign that all was well and secure.

39. Emperor Shah Alam issued a farman in 1768 described in The National Register of Private Records, No. 1, Part II, #803 as follows, "Farman. 7 October, 1768. From Emperor Shah Alam to Gosain Murlidhar. Regarding grant of Mauza Rasalpur (Gokul) by way of Inam-al-Timga to Murlidhar and his children; instructs all the officers to consider this as a strict order and a strong injunction and that they should not ask for a fresh deed every year."

The document is clearly identified as in'am. It reaffirms the control of Gokul and suggests that the current gosain and his children will retain the property in perpetuity. Another document was granted in December 1773 stating, "From Zulfikar-ud-Daulah to Gosain Murlidhar. Regarding grant of villages Gokul, Mubarakpur and the lands thereof as free of taxes to Murlidhar and his children; instructs all the officers to take notice of it." Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

THE EVIDENCE FROM RAJPUT PATRONAGE; THE VALLABHA SAMPRADAYA IN MEWAR STATE, 1648-1671 A.D.

By the mid-seventeenth century the Vallabha Sampradaya had become a powerful and influential force in Mathura. Havelis designed in regal splendor, large tracts of grazing lands, whole villages had become part of the gosain's empire. Adept in the magnification of their own images, the maharajas had realized multiple forms of cultural dominance based on the sustained patronage of Mughal emperors. By 1664 the sect reached beyond Mathura utilizing the same tactics that had previously propelled it into a position of importance and authority in Brajasthan. The gosains made contact with the Maharanas of Mewar, leaders of a fiercely independent kingdom known for its open defiance of the Empire.

Mewar was governed by a class of Rajput nobility who controlled large fiefs and staunchly defended their independence. The Vallabha Sampradaya found a willing and powerful advocate in the unquestioned leader of the nobility, Maharana Jagat Singh of Mewar. Known for his hostility to Mughal rule, Jagat Singh was a natural proponent of bhakti revivalism and a welcome recipient of the economic and cultural benefits of the devotional movement. The possibility of multiplying religious, economic and social control in an environment where Hindu autonomy had been fiercely maintained for centuries must certainly have been attractive.

The sect formally moved to Mewar in 1669 A.D., settling in the small village of Sinhar which was later renamed Nathdwara, "the portal of Sri Nath," in honor of the deity. The move to Mewar followed years of careful preparation. The Sampradaya secured a village adjacent to Sinhar in Asotiya. The goswamis cultivated the religious interest of the Maharana and his family. However, the transition was still explained as the will of Sri Nathji. In an extension of the same process that had elevated Vallabha to the status of holy man and acharya, and equated the Sampradaya with the theological traditions of Vishnuswami, the journey became a symbol of the deity's will. It was seen as the desire of a god, who, in fleeing the terrible onslaughts of Mughal oppression, had found shelter in a village which he proclaimed home.¹ In this manner a "holy city" was intentionally created becoming a bastion of Vallabhacharya tradition. Nathdwara was

1. In summarizing these legends the art historian Robert Skelton states, "The image of Shri Nathji is said to have been removed to Gokul (from Mount Govardhan) by Vitthalnath and remained there until 1669 A.D. when the Emperor Aurangzeb ordered the destruction of Hindu temples in the Mathura region. In order to save the image, Goswami Damodar Lal is said to have removed the image to Rajasthan under the protection of Maharana Raj Singh of Mewar. On reaching the village of Sinhar, twenty-four miles north of Udaipur, the cart carrying the image is said to have stuck in the mud and this was taken as an omen that the god wished to reside there." Skelton, Rājāsthāni Temple Hangings, p. 26. According to sectarian traditions, the high priest Damodar Lal, had journeyed to Jodhpur hoping to find sanctuary for the images. However, the Maharaja of Jodhpur was not in the city and immediate safety could not be found. Continuing his journey in the direction of Udaipur, Damodar Lal brought the image of Sri Nathji to Sinhar where it has remained for more than three hundred years. This explanation also appears in most articles, commentaries and tracts currently produced by the sect. It is a myth of dominance and authority that emphasizes the decree of Krishna that the Sampradaya find a new home. Aetiologically the legend explains the origin of the name Nathdwara and justifies the cult's continued presence there.

established as a controlled environment offering the maharajas unlimited access to all facets of life.

The sampradaya asserts that the primary impetus for the move was the possibility of Mughal persecution. This does not appear to be a wholly adequate explanation. The myths and legends surrounding the move fail to demonstrate how almost overnight a major Vaishnavite devotional sect could transform a small, insignificant village in an isolated part of Rajasthan into a center of art, culture and bhakti lore. They fail to show how seemingly without any preparation, a group of Vaishnavite priests and religious leaders were made welcome in a state that had for centuries been Shaivite. Thus, the sect was given both property and protection and assured of the continued support by the rulers of this Sisodia kingdom without question. With little difficulty the cult's primary images of Sri Nathji, Sri Dwarkanath and Sri Mathuranath were installed in havelis in Nathdwara, Asotiya and Kankroli, as devotees, artisans, painters and literati all spontaneously flocked to the region.

Two arguments can be advanced against the sect's assertion. First, while the religious climate of Mathura and other holy cities had certainly degenerated, in the late seventeenth century and the future of Vaishnavism may have been temporarily jeopardized, there was little real danger of the elimination of temple worship or the extermination of any one sampradaya. Aurangzeb's efforts to stamp out the practice of image worship were hardly successful.

The Emperor's efforts to both collect the jizya and to demolish temples were frequently thwarted. On January 29, 1693 a soldier in

Malwa was prevented from assessing the jizya by a Hindu zamindar.² "A Muslim officer who was sent in 1671 to destroy temples at the ancient pilgrimage city of Ujjain was killed in a riot that broke out as he tried to carry out his orders."³ In addition, there are recorded cases of the demolition of temples being postponed or "neglected" as priests paid Mughal officers to keep their sanctuaries standing.⁴ Aurangzeb's 1679 order did little to prevent the ongoing practice of puja or darshan. Rather, as a statement of policy it attempted to impress on a Hindu population the dominance of his Islamic state. While this and other overtures often produced fear of repression, the state the Emperor so vividly dreamed of was hardly realized.

If the Vallabhacharya cult had been persecuted as a sect it is doubtful that it would have been so quickly received in a Hindu state that was trying to maintain a balance of power with a new Emperor. In 1669 Mewar was not in a position to upset its delicate relations with the Empire. The act of harboring a run away Hindu sampradaya fleeing the vengeance of Aurangzeb would have strained the fragile peace that had been created between Agra and Udaipur.⁵

2. Ikram, Muslim Civilization in India, p. 232.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Mewar was still consolidating its resources. The early part of the seventeenth century had been filled with war, famine and the forced evacuation of a major part of the state as the Mughal armies penetrated Mewar's perimeters. After an eventual defeat and the coronation of a new Maharana, Jagat Singh, policies of toleration with Agra were instituted. Jagat Singh's successor, Raj Singh, continued these same tactics maintaining good relations with Aurangzeb even at the

Mewar was not in a position to upset its relationship with Agra. By starting a tradition of sending presents to vassals of Shah Jahan in 1633, Jagat Singh had carefully constructed a peace and a mutual respect. After so many years of mistrust between the Mughal Empire and Mewar, broken by brief periods of war, such an unwritten pact was tenuous at best. Raj Singh, continuing these policies in 1669, would not have given the Vallabha Sampradaya asylum if strained relations with Agra could have been a result.

Second, firm evidence demonstrates that well before Aurangzeb's 1669 order the Vallabhacharya gosains had actively sought the patronage of the Mewari Rajputs. An imperial order of Maharana Raj Singh issued

time of the 1669 order. G. N. Sharma concludes, "While Raj Singh was busy erecting works of public utility, Aurangzeb was engaged in measures calculated to the propagation of Islam. After his grand coronation (June 1659) he issued a number of ordinances to enforce Islamic rule of conduct in his dominions. In the 11th year of his reign (1668) he issued a general order to demolish temples and destroy schools and idols of the infidels.

"While the above series of laws and ordinances were passed at the Mughal court, Raj Singh was not stirred in the least. He continued sending regular embassies to the Mughal court and remained busy with his internal affairs, constructing lakes, palaces, observing religious rites and sending presents to Aurangzeb. There is no evidence to show that he protested against the Islamic legislation of the emperor. Nor did the imperial regulations create any kind of enmity between the Rana and Aurangzeb." G. N. Sharma, Mewar and the Mughal Emperors (1526-1707) (Agra: Shiva Lal Agarwal & Co. (private) Ltd., 1962), p. 142.

The task of reconstruction for both Maharanas was a major concern. Accordingly, both patronized Hindu art and religion and constructed projects of immediate benefit to the famine ridden population including lakes and the Raj Samand dam. Hostilities with the Mughal armies, which had pillaged Mewar's major cities by 1615 in an attempt to secure a direct path to expansion in the Deccan, were avoided. This later period was recognized for its consolidation of strength and culture. Sharma summarizes, "In the dominion of literature, art and architecture the period of peace between 1615-1679 A.D. can fitly be classed as the period of 'The Age or Rajput Renaissance.'" Ibid., p. 171.

in 1665 A.D.⁶ decreed that the village of Asotiya be given to Gosain Pranvallabhaji and Giridharilal. Introduced with the proper acclamations to Rama, Ganesh and a local Shaivite deity, the Rajasthani grant established the Sampradaya as a landowner only a few miles from the village of Sinhar that would soon become Nathdwara.

Other sources indicate that the relationship between the Mathura goswamis and the Mewar nobility actually began well before 1665. As early as 1658 Maharana Jagat Singh is said to have undertaken extensive pilgrimages to temples in the Braj-speaking parts of Rajasthan. On one such trip he is portrayed as the disciple and devotee of Sri Nathji.⁷

It is important to realize that during this period of initial contact between the Sampradaya and the Maharanas of Mewar, bhakti was far more than just a popular Hindu religion of the day. Rather, it was a source of art and artisans, of Sanskrit culture and of the loyalty and devotion of thousands of pilgrims who would flock to any location associated with Krishna. Those places in North India that did become associated with the bhakti movement often grew as centers of Hindu

6. See, Shastri, Kāndrolī kā Itihāsa, pp. 137-138.

7. Sri Ram Sharma concludes, "Jagat Singh's mother Jambuvati was very fond of going on pilgrimage. She celebrated Diwali of 1698 A.V. at Dwarka and made large gifts. In 1704 A.V. she went on a more extensive pilgrimage visiting Mathura and Gokul at the time of Diwali." Sri Ram Sharma, Maharana Raj Singh and His Times (Delhi: Matilal Banarsidass, 1971), p. 16. In making these observations the author utilizes a document of the period, the Ranchhod.

This event is also confirmed by G. N. Sharma using data gathered from a copper plate (#477) and a narrative (Jagat Singh Kavya). According to Sharma both Jagat Singh and his mother Jambuvati made several pilgrimages to the area between V. 1704 and V. 1709 (1647-52 A.D.) visiting Dwarka, Gokul and Mathura. All three areas were centers of Vallabhacharya activity. Ibid.

culture.⁸ Festivals filled such holy cities to their bursting points. Significantly, bhakti brought not only fame to a region but income as well.

Therefore it is not surprising that a major Vaishnavite bhakti sect that had proved capable of attracting a wide following and the interest of two Mughal Emperors would attract the rulers of Mewar. Both Jagat Singh and his successor Raj Singh had worked hard to revive the image of the state which had suffered in military defeats in 1614 and as the result of extensive famine prior to 1662. In an attempt to re-establish Mewar as a center of culture, palaces and temples had been constructed, by 1652, with dams and large lakes begun in 1662. The economic and sociological benefits of a bhakti "revival" that had the potential of transforming a handful of insignificant and economically unproductive villages into the major center of Vaishnavite art and religion were not overlooked.

For centuries Mewar had been a Shaivite state. Since the eighth century the patron deity of Mewar had been Eklingji, an incarnation of Shiva. A strong tie existed between the Maharana and the priesthood of Eklingji reinforced by centuries of tradition.⁹ However, Mewar had not

8. For a discussion of bhakti culture in Mathura see, Hein, The Miracle Plays of Mathura.

9. Sri Ram Sharma describes the relationship between the deity and the Maharanas who were understood as the god's personal servants and temporal representatives, "It was customary for a new Maharana to set out for the temple of Ekling soon after coronation. In law Ekling was the ruler of Mewar. When a newly crowned Maharana came to the temple, he performed the usual acts of worship at the temple whereupon the Mahant of the temple would proclaim him the new diwan--prime minister--of Mewar on behalf of the god. To mark the occasion the Maharana was

benefitted economically from the worship of Ekling. The deity attracted few pilgrims from outside the state, inspired little art and while producing a comradeship among the Rajput soldiers who fought under his banner, offered Mewar little else.

Thus, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Sisodia rulers of Mewar gave their patron deity no more attention than made absolutely necessary by their title. The Maharanas participated in the annual festival of Ekling as expected. They utilized the seal of the god and his salutation on royal orders and letters.¹⁰ Yet, there are

presented with a robe of honour, a sword, a royal umbrella, a chamar to keep away flies as the signs of office." Sharma, Maharana Raj Singh and His Times, p. 17.

10. The usual salutation on all grants issued by the Maharana included statements to, "The Victory of Sri Ram," "By the Grace of Sri Ganeshji," and "By the Grace of Sri Eklingji."

The possibility of uneasiness between the Ekling priesthood and his emerging Vaisnavite sampradaya is also indicated by the failure of Raj Singh to confirm the initial grant of the village of Sinhar. It was not until 1793 A.D. that the Maharana Jagat Singh II issued an imperial order publicly granting this site to the Vallabha Sampradaya. Before this date the sect occupied the land under the auspices of the head of the province of Dilwara, a major district in Mewar. Hence, Sinhar did not formally become a royal gift until forty-five years after the gosains arrived in the state.

The Ekling cult, while neither overtly evangelical nor concerned with expansion beyond the borders of the state, did hold great influence in the military. G. N. Sharma concludes, ". . . of all the causes which prolonged the existence of Mewar one of the most potent was the religious unity and fervour of the fighting class due to their association with the cult of Siva, and their faith in Ekaling (sic.), the supreme deity of the house of Harita." Sharma, Mewar and the Mughal Emperors, p. 162.

Epic poems of the period such as Ekling Mahatmya reflect the influence of this Shaivite cult among the general population. Ekling became a unifying force that kept the disparate elements of Mewari culture together during long periods of war. Since the Maharana acted on behalf of the god, his military campaigns were usually seen with an aura of the just war. Thus, Mewar was a theocracy which under the

few paintings or records of the period extant that reflect an interest of these Rajput rulers in spreading the cult of Ekling either numerically or geographically. Rather, their attention was often diverted to other, more popular, forms of Hinduism, and specifically to Vaishnavism.

Therefore, both Jagat Singh and Raj Singh let it be known that they had adopted the way of pushtimarg as their personal religion. They made pilgrimages to the sect's temples. They welcomed the Vallabhacharya goswamis as seers, respecting their office and giving them darshan. In return, the fruits of the bhakti movement--painters and the devotees who purchased their work, pilgrims and the merchants who provided for their needs, temples and the service industries that maintained the images, all came to Mewar. There was little risk in supporting a sampradaya that had already received the patronage of the Empire, in a state that in the aftermath of defeat and depression now attempted to revive its image.

A Vallabhacharya temple hanging or pichhavai (Figure 4) produced in Nathdwara about 1830 A.D.¹¹ illustrates the association of the sampradaya with the personal religion of the Maharanas--a distinction that continued throughout the devolution of the Mughal Empire and the

leadership of its Maharanas and their tutelary god Ekling, maintained a symbol of Rajput vitality and strength.

Therefore, in order not to alienate either the military or the Ekling priesthood, Sri Nathji remained a "visitor" in Mewar until 1793. At that time the village of Sinhar was transformed into the holy city of Nathdwara so the mischievous Krishna could proclaim to all that he had found a new home.

11. The Pichhavai is reproduced in Cleveland Museum of Art, Indian Art from the George P. Bickford Collection, p. 90.



Figure 4. "Worship of Shri Natha-ji" -- Nathdwara ca. 1830. Reproduced from Cleveland Museum of Art, Indian Art from the George P. Bickford Collection, p. 90.

advent of British rule in India.¹² The image of Shri Nathji is shown receiving darshan. Nathji's attendants include a Tailangara brahmin and a well dressed Rajput who is identified as Maharana Raj Singh.

12. In the recent history of Mewar there is striking evidence of the continuity of the association between priest and ruler over time. Appendix A includes a comparative table of Vallabhacharya gosains and their Rajput patrons from the seventeenth through twentieth centuries. The table (appearing in Shastri's Kankroli ka Itihāsa, p. 125) has been translated from Hindi and supplemented with western dates. Also included in the appendix is a portrait of Tilkayat Sri Giridharlalji in the company of Maharana Sri Shambhu Singh. Taken in the late nineteenth century the portrait is yet another illustration of the warm relationship that developed between church and state. Two tables of specific villages granted to the Kankroli temple show the penetration of the sect into all parts of the state. The first list records those villages deeded to the Kankroli haveli by the Maharanas themselves. The second reveals properties given to the cult by the thikandars or district chieftans of Mewar. Data in K. D. Erskine, ed., Rajputana Gazetteer Vol. II-A: The Mewar Residency (Ajmer: Scottish Mission Industries Co. Ltd., 1908), p. 94 describes the conversion of the thikandar of Begun who in 1824 became a mendicant at the shrines of Mathdwara and Kankroli, giving up his estate. A chart of land managed by the Nathdwara temple in different parts of Rajasthan indicates the broad range of the sect's dominion.

Further evidence of the recent character of patronage of the sect is contained in State Government of Rajasthan, Report of the Nathdwara Inquiry Commission. The Report contains brief glimpses of the nature of the relationship between Maharana and priest in the third decade of the twentieth century. The evidence suggested by the Commission points to a degree of inter-dependence so great that often lines between "church" and state are blurred. A letter describes the question of succession to the gadi of Nathdwara, "Letter of Goswami Govardhan Lalji Maharaj to Maharana Udaipur stating inter alla that in case Camodarlalji did not mend his manners, after Govardhan Lalji's death his grand-son Govindlalji be seated on the Gadi." Ibid., Appendix IV, p. lvi. Written on May 9, 1932 the letter clearly suggests that the office of gosain would be assumed by the grandson of the current Maharaj if Damodarlalji, the expected successor did not reform his ways. Such disputes are not new and may have existed as far back as the sons of Vitthalnath who vied for control of the seven svarupas. Yet, what is significant here is the question of succession to the leadership of a Hindu bhakti sect and the direct intervention of the Maharana. The mediation of the regent appears to be a matter of course in a system of mutual support and interdependence.

Pichhavais such as this as well as the early accounts of the pilgrimages of Jagat Singh and his mother Jambuvati to Mathura and Gokul reveal the interest of the royal families in publicly announcing their favor with Vallabhacharya doctrine and tradition.

In sum, the move from Mathura to Mewar was a complicated venture. It was clouded by the plurality of bhakti cults in North India and the increasing popularity of Mathura with many of these sects as the city took on a greater association with the life of Krishna than it ever had before. It was complicated by the expectation of Mughal persecution and the inference that the major cities outside the Hindu states were in all probability not to remain free from Aurangzeb's iconoclastic pursuits. Significantly, in the midst of these political and religious currents, the Vallabha Sampradaya sought to consolidate its resources in an area free from the worry of harassment and open to the development of new temples and shrines. These things the cult found in Mewar--an isolated and geographically protected area, removed from the center of Islamic activity.

There are few hard facts to suggest that the decision to move to Mewar was prompted just by the threat of persecution. A more attractive conclusion is the assumption that a significant relationship between the Maharanas of Mewar, regents of a backsliding state ravaged by decades of war, was cultivated over a period of many years. In light of the possibility of losing devotees who might be afraid to proclaim publicly any adherence to a Hindu sect in Mathura, and perhaps due to a temporary lapse in Mughal support and patronage under Aurangzeb, Mewar offered an attractive alternative location. That the Vallabha

Sampradaya was able to continue both the support of the Empire after the end of Aurangzeb's reign and the patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar as well as ample evidence of the economic considerations that motivated the goswami's decision. The Vallabhacharya gosains were shrewd and prudent investors. In two hundred years they had brought one of the myriad of Vaishnavite sampradayas in North India at the time into the public eye and had been able to capture the interest of Emperor and Maharana alike. It is untenable to think that these high priests would not have carefully weighed the economic benefits of such a large move given their previous accomplishments. In Nathdwara they found an environment that permitted them to control not only the worshipping population but the very sources of income and prestige that continued to magnify their image.

CHAPTER 5

THE EVIDENCE FROM RAJPUT PATRONAGE: THE VALLABHA SAMPRADAYA IN MEWAR, 1671-1743 A.D.

By 1665 the Vallabha Sampradaya had initiated a process in Mewar that by the end of the century would propel the sect into a position of cultural and economic dominance. The small, hitherto insignificant, village of Asotiya had been granted to the cult by Maharana Raj Singh. Asotiya was only a few miles from Raj Samand, a lake and dam that had been conceived by Raj Singh as an architectural monument. Intended to provide a famine stricken population with relief, Raj Samand was also planned as a resort for the aristocracy, and hence was a natural location for a sect that hoped to attract the wealthy and the powerful. Further, Asotiya was within a day's journey of Udaipur and opened the way for the cult's expansion into neighboring villages whose fiscal needs could still be serviced by the larger city. Thus, the Sampradaya defined and selected its environment choosing a site that was to become the playground of the rich.

In order to cement its influence in Mewar, the goswamis soon sought support from nobility in other parts of the state. By 1685 they had successfully negotiated the gift of two villages in Sadri, a major province located near the southern border of Mewar (see Figure 5). In



Figure 5. Mewar (1665)

a grant from Rajrana Sultan Singhji II, Phulpura and Bhopatpura were given to the sect.¹

Sadri was a political prize. Controlled by the Jhala Rajput clan, it had ancestral ties with the most important provinces in the state. The Jhalas occupied three principal locations in Mewar--Sadri, Dilwara (or Delwara) and Gogunda. The pargana of Dilwara included the village of Sinhar, later to be given to the sect by its provincial chief and renamed Nathdwara. Therefore, the interest of the chiefs of Sadri in the Sampradaya helped secure the cult's future in the immediate proximity of Asotiya.

Several years earlier, in 1671 A.D., the gosains had built a temporary shrine in Asotiya for the image of Dwarkadhish. A more permanent temple would be constructed later on the very shores of Raj Samand, in Kankroli. At the time of the initial installation of the image, the Maharana sent presents of soldiers, royal servants, elephants, and horses giving the blessings of the state to the shrine. This occurred some five years before the completion of the Raj Samand dam, in the lunar month of Badrapad, during the light half of the month, on the sixth day.²

1. The Rajrana of Sadri came to Asotiya and became a devotee of Dwarkadhish under the leadership of Brajbhusanji in 1685. By this time the gosain, one of the most successful of all eighteenth century leaders of the sect, had celebrated Vaishnavite festivals in Sadri with the assistance of Rajrana Sultan Singhji the second. Shastri, Kankroli-ka-Itihasa, p. 147.

2. This incident is cited by sectarian and non-sectarian sources alike. For example, a Gazetteer concludes, "When the inaugural ceremony of the Raj Samand was celebrated in 1676 the image of Dwarkanath was moved from Asotiya and seated in the present temple." Erskine, Rajputana Gazetteers, p. 113.

Significantly, the gosains timed the permanent installation to coincide with the inauguration of Raj Samand. In so doing they assured the attendance of the cream of Mewar's nobility. Thakurs, provincial chiefs and estate owners all came to an event that promised to be the single most important ceremony in eighteenth century Mewar. Later, stone tablets placed near the dam were to tell of it. Poets, in the Mewari epics were to write of it. As Raj Singh celebrated his most monumental achievement so the Sampradaya joined with him, enhancing its reputation and influence among the elite of Rajput society. To the public who witnessed these simultaneous events,³ the monarchy became inexorably linked with the blessings of Dwarkadhish, who had made Mewar his new home.

Soon after the inauguration of Raj Samand (see Figure 6) the Vallabha Sampradaya began to acquire additional property in the vicinity of Asotiya. Securing villages near Kankroli, the site of the permanent temple of Dwarkadhish, the gosains developed baronial estates much in the manner of Mewari nobility.

The process of achieving both influence and land was eventually crystallized in the nineteenth century when the sect was recognized as the unquestioned authority in the area surrounding Raj Samand. Nathdwara and Kankroli each became the central seats of Vallabhacharya doctrine and economic power. The Maharaj of Kankroli, for example, controlled twenty-one villages situated in different parts of Mewar and

3. Presumably the date of the inauguration of Raj Samand was set first. However, if this were not the case, and the dedication of the haveli took precedence, the dominance of the goswamis would be even more magnified.



Figure 6. Mewar (1685)

held rent free as muafi grants from the Maharana.⁴ Nathdwara included thirty villages controlled in a similar fashion.⁵

Nathdwara became the gadi or seat of the sect. Gosains residing in the holy city began to accumulate property in almost every part of Rajasthan as well as in other locations in North India. Large estates were acquired in Baroda, Bharatpur, Karauli, Kotah, Partabgarh and Ajmer. Income from these estates reached two lakhs while annual offerings at the Nathdwara temple grew to five lakhs.⁶

Such an increase in economic power depended on the ability of the maharajas to fuel the process of fiscal growth and at the same time achieve a broad base of cultural and religious authority. There is striking evidence that through a continuing association with the Maharanas of Mewar they were able to achieve this.

The Sampradaya received a series of grants from the Mewari crown between 1695 and 1701 A.D.⁷ Each grant shows the increasing commitment

4. "Kankroli--An estate consisting of twenty-one villages situated in different parts of Mewar and held by the Gosain of the Dwarkadish temple as a muafi or free grant from the Maharana." Erskine, Rajputana Gazetteers, p. 113.

5. "Nathdwara--an estate consisting of one town, Nathdwara, and thirty villages situated in different parts of Mewar and held by the Maharaj Gosain as a muafi or free grant from the Maharana." Rao Sahib Pandit Yamuna Lal, The Census of Mewar: The Village Directory, Dishara District and Sessions Judge, ed. (Udaipur: Newal Kishore Press, 1942), pp. 121-122. The work lists thirty muafi villages in Nathdwara, which are undoubtedly the same. A similar list of twenty villages is cited for Kankroli. The latter (see also footnote 4) is identical to a list of villages taken from Shastri's Kankroli ka Itihasa and reproduced in Appendix A.

6. Erskine, Rajputana Gazetteers, p. 119.

7. The grants are reproduced (in Rajasthani) in Shastri, Kankroli ka Itihasa, pp. 151-152.

of the lineage of Raj Singh to the well being of the sect. The first, issued in V.S. 1751 (1695 A.D.) orders that the villages of Asotiya and Rajnagar be given to gosain Brajbhusanji. In a reaffirmation of the original Asotiya grant this document specifies that the maharaj will live in a haveli on the shore of Raj Samand. The village of Rajnagar is also given to the sect. More important, the language of the order suggests that such an arrangement can only benefit Raj Samand and therefore is understood as an asset to the reigning Maharana, Amar Singh. The grant was written on the twelfth day of the fourth lunar month. A second order issued the following year reconfirmed the gift of Rajnagar. A third document is dated six years later, V.S. 1757 (1701 A.D.), and records the gift of a large haveli to Brajbhusanji. The document lists the dimensions of a palatial mansion that as the personal donation of the Maharana marked the magnification of the sect's image and authority in Mewar:⁸

The Victory of Sri Ram

The Grace of Sri Ganesh

The Grace of Sri Ekling

Friends

Maharajadhiraj Maharana Sri Amarsinghji commands to Gusai Brijbhusanji his one haveli east west 81 (eighty-one) gaj, north south 71 (seventy-one) gaj, accumulating 5751 gaj (five thousand seven hundred fifty-one). . . .

Pancoli Damodardas, Pancoli Gordhandas having written it. Samvat 1757, the month of Magaser, the 8th day.

In 1737 A.D. the gosains gained absolute control of the village of Sinhar which at this time they renamed, Nathdwara. A document

8. Ibid., p. 152.

issued by the Maharana confirmed the gift which was originally given by the chief of the province of Dilwara:⁹

Maharana Sri Gujjut (Sic.) Singh Commanding.

The village of Siarh in the hills, of one thousand rupees yearly rent, having been chosen by Nathji (the god) for his residence, and given up by Rinna Raghude, I have confirmed it. The Gosaen and his heirs shall enjoy it forever.

Samvat 1793 A.D. 1737.

In this muafi grant, which is similar to the Mughal madad-i-ma'ash farmans, the Vallabha Sampradaya became exempt from paying taxes of any kind.¹⁰ The revenues from the properties granted could be collected by the new owner and utilized for any purpose that he saw fit. In this case, the revenue amounted to one thousand rupees annually.

9. James Tod, Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or The Central and Western Rajpoot States of India, Vol. 1 (Calcutta: The Indian Publication Society, Ltd., 1899), pp. 577-578.

10. Land tenure in Mewar was of three principal types--jagir, bhum and sasan. Jagir grants had a broad application and were usually given because of political favor. The holders of jagirs were most often Rajputs and were given land much in the same manner as the Mughal government assigned its jagirs. The jagir became a way of insuring the existence of a standing army and a class of fighting nobility who would defend their property in return for the favor of the Emperor or Maharana. Bhum grants in Mewar were also given most often to Rajputs. However, Bhum lands were given with the added stipulation that the recipient pay a nominal rent and perform services as payment for the use of the property. The final category, sasan (or muafi), was reserved for charitable organizations. It was this category of land that was given to the Vallabha Sampradaya.

A later grant (1778-1779)¹¹ broadened the control of the Sampradaya in neighboring villages and provided the sect with additional lands:

Siddh Sri Maharajadhiraj, Maharana Sri Bhim Singhji commanding.

The undermentioned towns and villages were presented to Sriji by copper-plate. The revenues (hasil), contributions (barar), taxes, dues (lagat-be-lagat), trees, shrubs, foundations and boundaries (nim-sim), shall all belong to Sriji. If of my seed, none will ever dispute this.

The ancient copper plate being lost I have thus renewed it.

James Tod, who translated the document, concludes, "Here follows a list of thirty-four entire towns and villages, many from the fisc, or confirmations of the grants of the chiefs, besides various parcels of arable land, from twenty to one hundred and fifty bighas, in forty-six more villages, from chiefs of every class, and patches of meadowland (bira) in twenty more."¹²

This document, by its own admission, reflects the earlier acquisition of land near Nathdwara. Nothing is exempted from the order. Fields, forests, foundations already built--all being to the deity and to the pujaris who maintain his temple or haveli.¹³

11. In citing this grant, Tod (in Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, Vol. 1, Calcutta, p. 578) suggests that the order is undated. However, given by Maharana Bhim Singh, the grant clearly falls between 1778 and 1779. Bhim Singh was inaugurated in 1778 and died in the following year.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

The process by which the goswamis accumulated property and power received a final, definitive act of support from the regents of Mewar before its maximization in the late nineteenth century. A muafi grant issued under the name of Bhim Singh was given to the sect in 1809 A.D.:

Sri Maharana Bhim Singhji Commanding

To the towns of Sri-ji, or to the (personal) lands of the Gosaen-ji no molestation shall be offered. No warrants or exactions shall be issued or levied upon them. All complaints, suits or matters, in which justice is required, originating in Nat'hdwara, shall be settled there; none shall interfere therein, and the decisions of the Gosaen-ji I shall invariable confirm. The town and transit duties (of Nathdwara and villages pertaining thereto), the assay (purkhaye) fees from the public markets, duties on precious metals (kasoti), all brokerage (dulali) and dues collected at the four gates; all contributions and taxes of whatever kind, are presented as an offering to Sri-ji; let the income thereof be placed in Sri-ji's coffers.

All the products of foreign countries imported by the Vaisnavas whether domestic or foreign, and intended for consumption at Nathdwara, shall be exempt from duties. The right of sanctuary (sirma) of Sri-ji, both in the town and in all his other villages, will be maintained: the Almighty will take cognizance of any innovation. Wherefore, let all chiefs, farmers of duties, beware of molesting the goods of Nathji (the God), and wherever such may halt, let guards be provided for their security, and let each chief convey them through his bounds in safety. If of my blood, or if my servants, this warrent will be obeyed for ever and ever. Whoever resumes this grant will be a caterpillar in hell during 60,000 years.

By command--through the chief butler (parairi) Eklingdas: written by Surut Sing, son of Nathji Pancholi, Mah-su 1st, Samvat 1865; A.D. 1809.

The grant gave the Sampradaya the complete protection of the Maharana. Transit duties, fees from public markets, duties on precious metals, gate fees (moneys collected on entrance to the walled city), contributions and taxes were all presented to the gosains. Further, the sect was permitted to import any goods that it might need duty

free. Provincial chiefs were required to protect the god's caravans as they travelled through their districts. Finally, this document as the two before it, was issued to the gosains and their descendents--forever.

The ability of the maharajas to extract duties on goods produced in the market place was an important part of their regular income. In the Gujarat, where fees of this nature were responsible for an even larger percentage of the gosains' income, strict regulations were adopted for their collection.¹⁴ Bhattia, Bania and Lowana merchants signed agreements affecting almost every item they sold. One quarter anna per one hundred rupees of sale were to be collected on all types of cloth. One anna per every thousand rupees of transaction were to be gathered on bills of exchange and drafts. Pearls and jewels, grain of every type, food stuffs including ghi, oil and rice were all taxed. Raw materials such as iron, rope, gold and silver were assessed at different levels depending on their worth and the unit of measurement. Services by insurance brokers, agency brokers and cloth merchants also had duties levied upon them.

The goswamis' authority in Nathdwara in a similar fashion pervaded every aspect of society. From the taxes brought upon commodities in the bazar to the fees collected from pilgrims as they passed through the city gates, no possible source of revenue was left untouched. In achieving this maximization of authority and control the deith was always judged as paramount.

14. See Appendix B for a detailed list of duties and fees placed on goods and services in the Gujarat.

What had taken place in the small village of Sinhar between 1665 and 1809¹⁵ was a radical transformation. Within that time a process had been instituted, that, while overtly depending totally on the deity, had modified cultural, social and political power structures in Sinhar. Sinhar became Nathdwara, but only after the gosains had magnified their dominance so that no segment of society was unreached.

In the interim the political fortunes of the state had shifted. Mewar had been invaded by Aurangzeb in 1679 immediately after the fall of Marwar to the south as the Emperor attempted to push the Empire northward. An uneasy truce became the link between Rajput autonomy and total control by the Mughals.

However, even these far reaching events did not affect the Vallabha Sampradaya's domination of Nathdwara, Kankroli and the area around the Raj Samand dam. The process that had been begun in the mid-seventeenth century was too complete to be disrupted. Nathdwara had become a virtual Vatican, controlling all of the commerce that passed through its walled gates and existing in relative isolation from the rest of the state. The gosains had even gained the privilege of trade with other Hindu states.

Nathdwara had experienced a cultural renaissance that was perhaps the most pervasive symbol of authority the Sampradaya had encouraged. Pichhavaais (temple hangings used during the darshan),

15. This late document was probably a re-confirmation of an earlier edict. Bhim Singh in whose name the grant was issued, died some thirty years before. As the Mughal madad-i-ma'ash farmans (given to Vitthalnath even after his demise) show, the name of a major benefactor or recipient was often continued after death.

miniature paintings and other objects of art lifted the influence of Sri Nathji as total and complete. The Nathdwara school of art gained a reputation that not only spread across Mewar but into other regions of Rajasthan. Vallabhacharya artists soon began to exert a noticeable influence among other schools of Vaishnavite art. Similarly, bhajans and Ras Lilas became a part of life in the walled city that was the temporal kingdom of the dark god. No segment of culture, no artistic endeavor was without the influence of Sri Nathji. As the caretakers of this now all powerful deity the maharajas cultivated a magnification of their own images that was without equal.

In achieving all of this the muafi grants received by the sect became a predictable source of stability. Unlike secular grants in Mewar which were either taxable or dependent on the service of the recipient, the muafi lands became the exclusive property of the goswamis who obtained them. They were also a source of power for the Maharanas who, by exerting their influence over the grantees, could assure allegiance from parts of the state where the sect had extended its own control.

The Sampradaya's rapid growth in Mewar, through the muafi grant system, was fashioned in a similar manner to the cult's use of madad-i-ma'ash in Mathura. As recipients of both forms of patronage the gosains were able to impress on their mentors an understanding of bhakti as not only theologically correct but practical as well. The doctrine of pushtimarg thus became representative of the grace of God which when acknowledged through regular service (seva) is rewarded in both

spiritual as well as physical material ways--a doctrine very much in keeping with Vallabhacharya's own theology.

CHAPTER 6

THE EVIDENCE FROM RAJPUT ART: THE VALLABHA SAMPRADAYA IN BUNDI AND KISHANGARH STATES

By the end of the eighteenth century the Vallabha Sampradaya was well established in Mewar. The sect had been the personal religion of the Maharanas of Mewar for over a hundred years. The gosains had transformed a small, insignificant village into a thriving, bustling city. They had cultivated enormous influence, becoming a major force in the court where they continuously sought to multiply their power and dominance. Utilizing the same tactics that had magnified their position in Mewar, the goswamis soon sought after the rich and the secure in neighboring states.

The evidence for the Sampradaya's influence in Kishangarh and Bundi, two small Rajput kingdoms often dominated by Mewar (see Figures 7 and 8) comes from the art the sect inspired. Originating in Mewar as a satellite industry for pilgrims, miniature paintings and pichhavaais (temple hangings) were produced on a large scale. A school of art named after Nathdwara, where it was created, soon influenced painting in Mewar and adjacent areas.

The emergence of such a large school of art is symptomatic of a broad economic and cultural base of support. This the Sampradaya had carefully developed in Kishangarh, Bundi and Jaipur.¹ Expanding

1. There is evidence that the sect gathered the interest of rulers of these and other states through broad based festivals such as

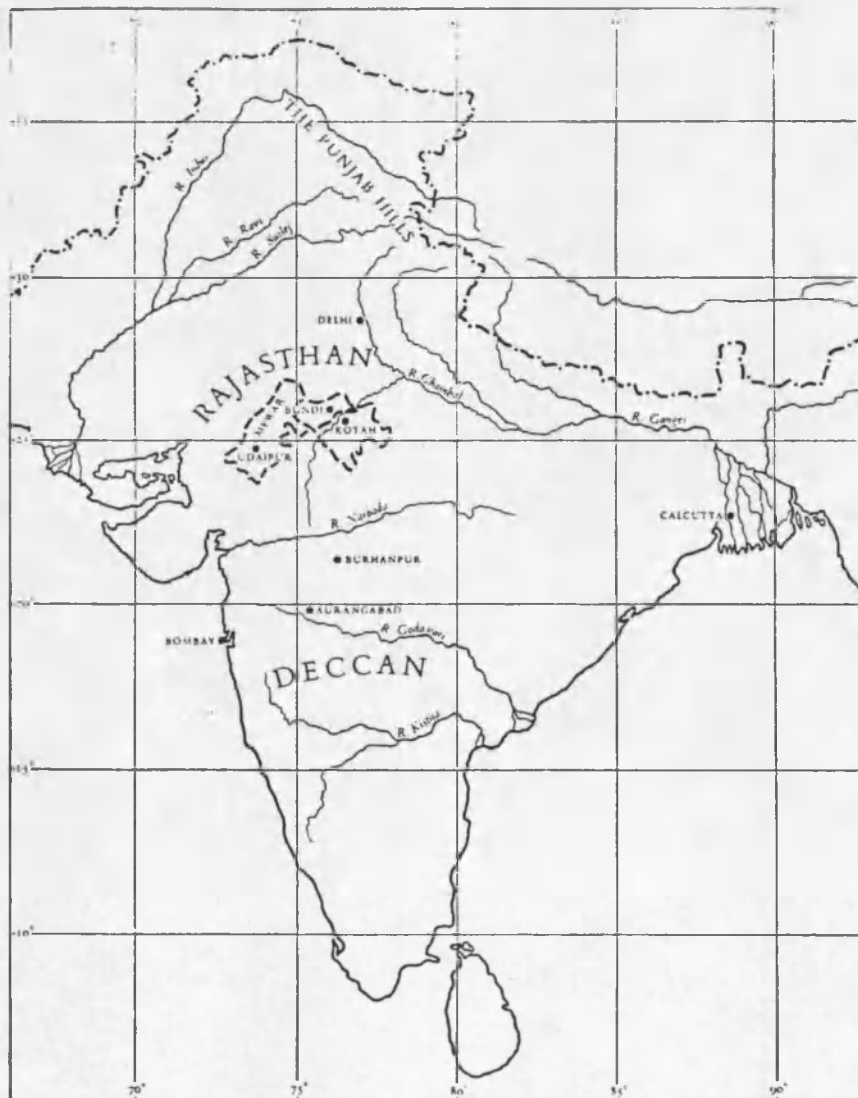


Figure 7. India in the Mid-Seventeenth Century Showing Mewar, Bundi and Kotah -- Source: Archer, Indian Painting in Bundi and Kotah, p. vi.



Figure 8. Detail Showing the Major Cities of Udaipur, Kishangarh and Bundi, as well as Nathdwara and Kankroli -- Source: Government of India, Surveyor General of India, Survey of India Map Catalogue (Calcutta, 1945).

their prestige among the nobility, securing income from commerce and local industry, taxing their devotees, the cult had created an empire,

the Annakut. This major festival became a way, wiht other utsavas, of attracting regents from different parts of Rajasthan to established Vallabhacharya temples. Annakut was the celebration of the feeding of Krishna. Robert Skelton describes the rite. "This festival is also known as the Govardhan since it commemorates the feeding of Krishna in his manifestation as the god of the mountain. It takes place on the first of the light half of the month Kartik and celebrates the first fruits of the autumn harvest. Sri Nathji wears a silver chakdar jama and a distinctive type of peacock feathered turban ornament. The background of the stele is covered with an orange cloth and the pichhavai is black with white floral designs within arches. Skelton, Rājāsthānī Temple Hangings, p. 93.

The Annakut and the festival of the seven svarupas of Sri Nath (during which the images are brought to a common location and worshipped) have become important historical ways in which the Sampradaya has attracted rulers who otherwise might not have come into contact with the sect. A description of an early Annakut ceremony, estimated to have taken place in 1748 A.D., is related by James Tod. Tod says, "About eighty years ago on a memorable assemblage at the Ancuta, before warfare had devastated Rajasthan and circumscribed the means of the faithful disciples of Heri, amongst the multitude of Vishnues of every region were almost all the Rajput princes; Rana Ursi of Mewar, Raja Bijy Sing of Marwar, Raja Gul Sing of Bikaner, and Buhadur Sing of Kishengurh. Rana Ursi presented to the god a tora, or massive golden anklechain set with emeralds: Bijy Sing a diamond necklace worth 25,000 rupees: the other princes according to their means." James Tod, "On the Religious Establishments of Mewar," Journal of Oriental Research (December, 1828), p. 315.

Tod's description includes a reference to the "high priest" or gosain. He observes, "They were followed by an old woman of Surat with infirm step and shaking head, who deposited four coppers in the hand of the high-priest, which were received with a gracious smile, not vouchsafed to the lords of the earth. 'The Rana is in luck,' whispered the chief of Kishengurh to the Rana. Soon afterward the statue of Heri was brought forth, when the same old woman placed at its feet a bill of exchange for 70,000 rupees (35,000) crowns. The mighty were humbled, and the smile of the Gosaen was explained. Such gifts, and to a yet greater amount are, or were, far from uncommon from the sons of commerce, who are only known to belong to the flock from the distinguishing necklace (canti) of the sect." Ibid.

From this brief description, which was undoubtedly well implanted in the oral tradition of the sect in Tod's day, the Annakut is seen as a method of uniting the Vallabhacharya practices of Mewar, Marwar, Bikaner and Kishangarh--all states whose rulers came to venerate the way of pushtimarg. The sect's influence continued in each of these places as attested to by works such as, Government of India, Central

defined by the identity of the deity and actuated by the entrepreneurial ability of the gosains.

Publication Branch, The Ruling Princes, Chiefs and Leading Personages in Rajputana and Ajmer, 5th edition (Calcutta, 1924), p. 65. The book concludes that the Maharaja of Nathdwara (circa 1890) controlled lands (jagirs) in Kotah, Bikaner and seven other states.

However, in addition to Tod's description there are other documentary indications that the Annakut ceremony and that of the Seven Svarupas were means of stimulating communication among different Rajput rulers about the Vallabha Sampradaya. In this regard several pieces of correspondence between northern Rajasthani states are now held in private collections in India. G. N. Sharma, in a catalogue of Rajasthani documents describes the following letters: "#27--A letter No. 4 (portfolio file No. 4) of V.S. 1815 (1769 A.D.) to the ruler of Kishangarh, showing the enthusiasm of the ruler of Jodhpur for the spread of Vaisnavism," "#31--A letter of Maharaja Vijay Singh, V.S. 1838 (Portfolio File) refers to Annakut festival," "#32--A letter No. 4 (Portfolio File No. 4) of V.S. 1840 referring to a congregation of the seven images of Pustimarg at Kishangarh." G. N. Sharma, A Bibliography of Mediaeval Rajasthan (Social and Cultural) (Agra: Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, 1965), p. 22.

In another text, Sharma discusses the implication of these documents observing, "In one of the letters from Kishangarh, Vijay Singh of Jodhpur has been addressed as Vaisnavaseviparambhagavata, that is one who is the devotee of Vaisnavas and of the great god of the Bhagavata. A correspondence of the rulers of Jodhpur with other rulers of Rajasthan reveals that these rulers were enthusiastic about the spread of Vaisnavism in their states. They provided facilities to the Goswamis of this cult, such as lodging and funds, whenever they visited their capital towns. From the archival records, Jaipur, we learn that Goswamis and their wives and daughters who came to Jaipur on various occasions were provided lodging in Khedka-orchard or Ghat-garden, and the ruling princes and people visited them with presents. In V.S. 1840 (1783 A.D.) the ruler of Kishangarh convened at his capital a congregation of Sata Svarupa (seven images) of Pustimarga on his own initiative." Gopi Nath Sharma, Rajasthan Studies (Agra: Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, n.d.), p. 120. The Annakut and Sat Svarupa traditions were undoubtedly utilized after the Vallabha Sampradaya moved to Mewar in 1671 and probably before as a way of spreading the court religion of Pushtimarg. It was as much a part of this festival for the images of Sri Nathji, in their many rupas or forms, to be present as it was for royal guests from the households of Sisodias, Rathors and other Rajput clans. The sectarian literature of the Vallabha Sampradaya records an Annakut ceremony as early as Vikram Samvat 1731 or 1675 A.D. The rite lasted seven to eight days and was performed in the village of Sinhar

Utilizing this total economic, cultural and political means of subsistence the sect inspired a virtual renaissance in Mewari religious art. Historians agree that this resurgence in miniatures and temple hangings not only was responsible for a fresh style in painting but added a new conceptualization to the visual image of Krishna. Often using backgrounds of lavish reds (a fitting backdrop for royalty), which grew typical of the new school, the deity was depicted not in the rustic company of Brajvasi but among the nobility in the palaces. Krishna became enthroned, just as he had in the haveli, in regal settings taken from the finest of Rajput pavilions. Indeed, the dark god was ". . . no longer the tepid well-groomed youth of Mughal tradition, but a vigorous Rajput noble expressing . . . all the violent longings denied expression by the Rajput moral code."² As art historian W. G. Archer concludes, such drastic changes in Vaishnavite religious art can only be explained ". . . by reference to the cult of Krishna himself."³

Paintings produced in Mewar and Bundi⁴ in the seventeenth century expanded this theme as rulers and members of the court

(Nathdwara). Three images, Sri Nathji, Sri Dwarkadhish and Sri Vitthalnathji were brought together for the festival.

In addition to the Annakut, which is still celebrated by the Sampradaya and related sects drawing pilgrims from great distances, the gosains relied on prevailing customs of Rajput inter-marriage to spread its doctrines. In this manner the cult was able to penetrate the courts of Bundi, Surat and Kotah.

2. W. G. Archer, The Loves of Krishna in Indian Painting and Poetry (New York: Grove Press, n.d.), p. 101.

3. Ibid.

4. The small state of Bundi was located west of Kotah and east of Mewar. Bundi was bordered by Tonk and Jaipur to the north and Malwa to the south. Until the first quarter of the seventeenth century both

commissioned renderings of Krishna. The vision of the deity in these miniatures was consistent with the Rajput self-image and the theological understanding of Sri-Nathji initiated by Vallabha. There was no conflict. Even the havelis that housed the god had uniformly been erected as palatial mansions or palaces in support of a devata who was given darshan as a king. Hence, the doctrinal understanding and artistic conceptualization of Krishna underwent a transformation wherever the influence of the Nathdwara school was felt. The mischeivous boy sporting in the cow fields was thus to become a prince.

Logically, this transformation first took place in Mewar where the court had a long history of the patronage of art. Since the advent of Maharana Amar Singh I (1597-1620) the palace had become an active and creative workshop as artists produced paintings of sacred and secular themes to please the nobility.

Until 1628 these paintings had been executed by the school of Nasir-ud-din, a Muslim artist who is credited with the early development of the Mewar school. But, after the coronation of Jagat Singh and the replacement of Nasir-ud-din by Shahab-ud-din, the work of two Hindu painters became immediately evident.⁵ This occurred by 1651, ten years from the date of the first Asotiya grant in 1665, and two years after Jagat Singh had been seen in pilgrimages to known centers of Vallabhacharya activity.

Bundi and Kotah had been one state. But, due to divisions in the royal family as two rival brothers sought to capture the kingdom, the state was divided in 1625.

5. See, Portland Art Museum, Rajput Miniatures from the Collection of Edwin Binney III (Portland, 1969), p. 2.

Manohar and an unnamed artist produced miniatures showing Vaishnava influence. A miniature depicting the darshan of Krishna (Figure 9) painted in Chitor in 1651 was completed as an illustration to the Sur Sagar of Surdas (one of the eight astachap poets associated with the sect). This painting shows Radha and Krishna enthroned by moonlight. The deity and his consort are surrounded by gopis who provide music and relief from the still night air by the movement of a fan. The yak tail fan, usually found in palaces, as the musicians themselves, are necessary parts both of the court and the haveli. Krishna is treated as a prince whose countenance extends into both sacred and secular worlds.

Perhaps the most obvious example of the impact of the court patronage of art depicting Vallabhacharya motifs is a pichhavai produced in the nineteenth century.⁶ Showing the worship of Sri Nathji by a Tailangana brahmin and Maharana Raj Singh of Mewar, the work reveals the close association that had developed in the seventeenth century between the gosains and the Rajput rulers, by depicting the mutual veneration of the deity.

A phenomenon similar to that in Mewar occurred in Bundi in the mid-seventeenth century. After 1660, when a Bundi princess married Prince Raj Singh of Mewar, artists from Udaipur began to appear in Bundi. Sources agree that the resurgence of Bundi art which followed

6. See, Chapter 4.



Figure 9. Radha and Krishna at Night -- Illustration to Sursagar of Sur Das, Mewar ca. 1650. Collection: C. K. Kanoria, Calcutta, in Archer, Indian Painting in Bundi and Kotah, plate 1, p. 15.

was due to the inspiration of these painters who in the style of Mewar, depicted Krishna enthroned.⁷

However, there is also evidence of the earlier influence of Vallabhacharya motifs in Bundi. A drawing produced between 1635 and 1640 shows a noble seated on a swing surrounded by female attendants. Described as "Hindola Raga" the miniature depicts the prince giving darshan.⁸ The hindola was a favorite theme of the Pushtimarg school. The Vallabha Sampradaya was one of the few bhakti sects to worship Krishna in this manner. Here, the religious motif has been secularized. A prince, who takes the place of Krishna, grants darshan to female attendants who in sacred art would have been gopis.

Maharana Chhattar Sal (1631-1659), under whose reign and inspiration the Bundi resurgence began, was fond of sponsoring such paintings portraying himself as a great lover. It was common practice to surround the regent with female attendants as this picture presents. In this case Chhattar Sal's fantasy was based on a theological precedent that had become a Vallabhacharya ritual in Mewar and the Gujarat.⁹

7. Archer concludes, "None of these pictures could have been executed without Mewar influence" Indian Painting in Bundi and Kotah, p. 3. See also, "Radha and Krishna" (Bundi, mid-eighteenth century) Collection: Professor and Mrs. Walter Spink, in Walter Spink, Krishnamandala: A Devotional Theme in Indian Art (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, Special Publications Number 2, 1971), figure 91, p. 80.

8. Portland Art Museum, Rajput Miniatures, p. 26.

9. In the Gujarat the Vallabhacharya maharajas placed themselves on the hindola much as Chhattar Sal did in this example. B. N. Motiwala writes, "In the month of Sravan the Maharaja took delight in sitting on the Hindola (a sort of Swing) when his male and female followers moved it backwards and forwards with their hands. This privilege of swinging the Maharaja was purchased with presents to

The similarity of Mewari and Bundi painting is shown by two works (Figures 10 and 11). The same use of colors¹⁰ dominates each miniature. Earlier Mughal themes have been replaced by Krishna, who is the center of the artist's attention. The dress and deportment of the god are almost identical. The deity appears in both plates as a prince who, abandoning the responsibilities but not the affluence of his position, looks to the enchanted, forested realm of Vaishnavite mythology. Unlike earlier miniatures depicting the dark god, these paintings show the sophisticated mark of the palaces and courts in settings of undeniable luxury and elegance. Moreover, they reveal the dominance of a school of Vallabhacharya art that spread beyond the courts of Mewar into neighboring states as the way of pushtimarg was patronized by additional regents.

him. B. N. Motiwala, Karsondas Mulji, p. 85. The practice also appears in a miniature "Raga Hindola" (Sirohi, late seventeenth century) in, Cleveland Museum of Art, Indian Art from the George P. Bickford Collection, plate 79, p. 79. The work shows a prince seated on the hindola, surrounded by attendants in a state where the way of pustimarg was practiced in the courts. See also Appendix C for further data on the relevance of the hindola ceremony to the Sampradaya.

10. Red, blue and green were the identifying palette of the Mewari school. W. G. Archer observes, "Under its Ranas Jagat Singh (1628-52) and Raj Singh (1652-81) painting in Mewar had undergone a vital resurgence. Miniatures were produced in large quantities. A palette of glowing reds, blues and greens were perfected. Certain facial idioms were devised and a style combining geometric structure with romantic fervor had steadily matured. The purpose of this painting was to illustrate religious and poetic texts but in the process Mewar attitudes obtained expression. It is likely that in about 1665 artists from Udaipur migrated to Bundi bringing with them the Mewar style." Archer, Indian Painting in Bundi and Kotah, p. 3.



Figure 10. Radha and Krishna Exchanging Roles -- Mewar seventeenth century, in Spink, The Quest for Krishna, figure 104, p. 89.



Figure 11. Shudhamallara Ragini -- Bundi eighteenth century.
Collection: Edwin Binney III, in Spink, Krishnamandala,
figure 78, p. 66.

The evolution of Vallabhacharya art in the courts of Kishangarh (see Figures 12 and 13) is even more revealing than in Bundi.¹¹ Between 1735 and 1748 A.D. a series of Vaishnavite miniature paintings were executed in this small Rajput state (see Figure 12). Here, the concept of Krishna enthroned was magnified even beyond what had already been produced in Mewar and Bundi. As the Sampradaya gained multiple forms of authority and influence in the court so art inspired by the Rajput image of the deity became prevalent.

Historians agree that the major influence that brought Vallabhacharya religion to Kishangarh was the conversion of the son of Maharaja Raj Singh, Savant Singh. Savant Singh was born in 1699 A.D. He became well known after his adoption of the way of pushtimarg under the name Nagari Das, and was recognized as a major seventeenth century Braj poet. Nagari Das wrote of religious as well as romantic themes. In turn, his poetry inspired a school of art, for which Kishangarh has been known since its re-discovery by historians in the nineteenth

11. Kishangarh was situated in the Aravalli mountain range near Ajmer. The major cities of Kishangarh and Rupnagar were near other areas of Vallabhacharya activity (see Figure 13). Kishangarh, whose name is said to have come from "Krishna Garh" (the house of Krishna) was founded by Kishan Singh, from the house of Jodhpur, in 1609.

Kishangarh was traditionally allied to other Rajput states including Mewar. A government report suggests, "The states allied to Kishangarh by consanguinity are Jodhpur, Bikaner, Rutlam, Jhabua, Sailana, Sitamau and Idar. Marriages have taken place between the Kishangarh family and the Sisodia house of Udaipur, Partahgarh and Dungarpur, the Kachhwaha houses of Jaipur and Alwir, the Hara houses of Bundi and Kotah, the Bhatias of Jaisalmer, the Jhalas and Shaikhawats. The Maharaja's great grandmother was the daughter of Maharajkumar Amar Singh (II) of Udaipur. Government of India, The Ruling Princes, p. 119.



Figure 12. North India in the Seventeenth Century Showing Mewar and Kishangarh States



Figure 13. Detail Showing the Cities of Udaipur, Kishangarh, Rupnagar, Nathdwara and Kankroli -- Source: Government of India, Survey of India Map Catalogue.

century.¹² The primary executor of these works was Nihal Chand who residing at the court, utilized the palace as the setting for his portrayal of Krishna.

However, it was Maharaja Sadar Singh who commissioned most of the Kishangarh art during the period of Savant Singh's exile (1748-64).¹³ Under his rule the way of pushtimarg became a favorite pastime of the Kishangarh regents who continued to openly patronize the Vallabha Sampradaya and its art through the twentieth century.

Savant Singh eventually retired to Brindavan where, in keeping with the way of varnashramadharma, he became a Vallabhacharya sanyasi for the remainder of his life. Yet, in so doing he had firmly rooted the sect in Kishangarh state. The school of Nihal Chand, who was also the direct descendent of the divan Surdhaj Mulraj of Kishangarh and hence a member of the court in his own right, predominated. Kishangarh miniatures became in the manner the visual expression of the intense devotion of Rajput families to Vallabhacharya, dogma, ritual and worship.

Figure 14 captioned "Radha and Krishna Enthroned" is typical of the Kishangarh style in the eighteenth century and presents the divine couple in a regal setting. The deity, surrounded by attendants, sits

12. The most complete collection of Kishangarh paintings extant is the Lalit Akademie series. The producers of this monograph have been able to date the paintings and to authenticate those executed by Nihal Chand. Judging from the dates of Savant Singh's lover, Bani Thani, the collection is said to have been produced between 1735 A.D., when Bani Thani was a young girl, and 1748 when Savant Singh left Kishangarh with his mistress following a fratricidal war on the death of Raj Singh.

13. Portland Art Museum, Rajput Miniatures, p. 37.



Figure 14. Radha and Krishna Enthroned -- Kishangarh eighteenth century. Collection: S. C. Welch. In Spink, The Quest for Krishna, plate 9, p. 22.

on a Rajput throne and is dressed in elegant attire. Even the gopis, traditionally clad in the garb of Brajvasi shepherds, now appear as palace servants. The image of gold and luxury is everywhere.

Figure 15 titled "The Pavilion in the Grove" (Nihal Chand, 1742-1748) continues the same imagery. The environment is unmistakably a palace, with white marble arches and fountain. Krishna is painted in complete comfort and elegance. The gopis prepare to adorn him with garlands in a setting that extends the authority of the deity beyond the temple or haveli, and into the court.

An identical scene (Figure 16) can be found in the architecture of the Vallabhacharya haveli in Jaipur, which has even been built as an integral part of the city palace. The union of temple and sovereign estate is so complete that it is difficult to distinguish between them. The city palace (Figure 16) has become a natural environment for the deity who gives darshan as a Rajput prince.

In seventeenth century Jaipur and later in the courts of Kishangarh, the gosains had so magnified their influence and authority that the division between the sacred realm of Sri Nathji and the secular palace had dissolved. The theological foundation for this union of church and state is discussed by historian Karl Khandavala: "In the Vallabhacharya creed everything must be of the best for Krishna. He must dwell in the finest of cities, reside in the finest of mansions, spend his leisure in the most beautiful of pavilions, sit on the most precious thrones, eat the daintiest food and wear the most elegant

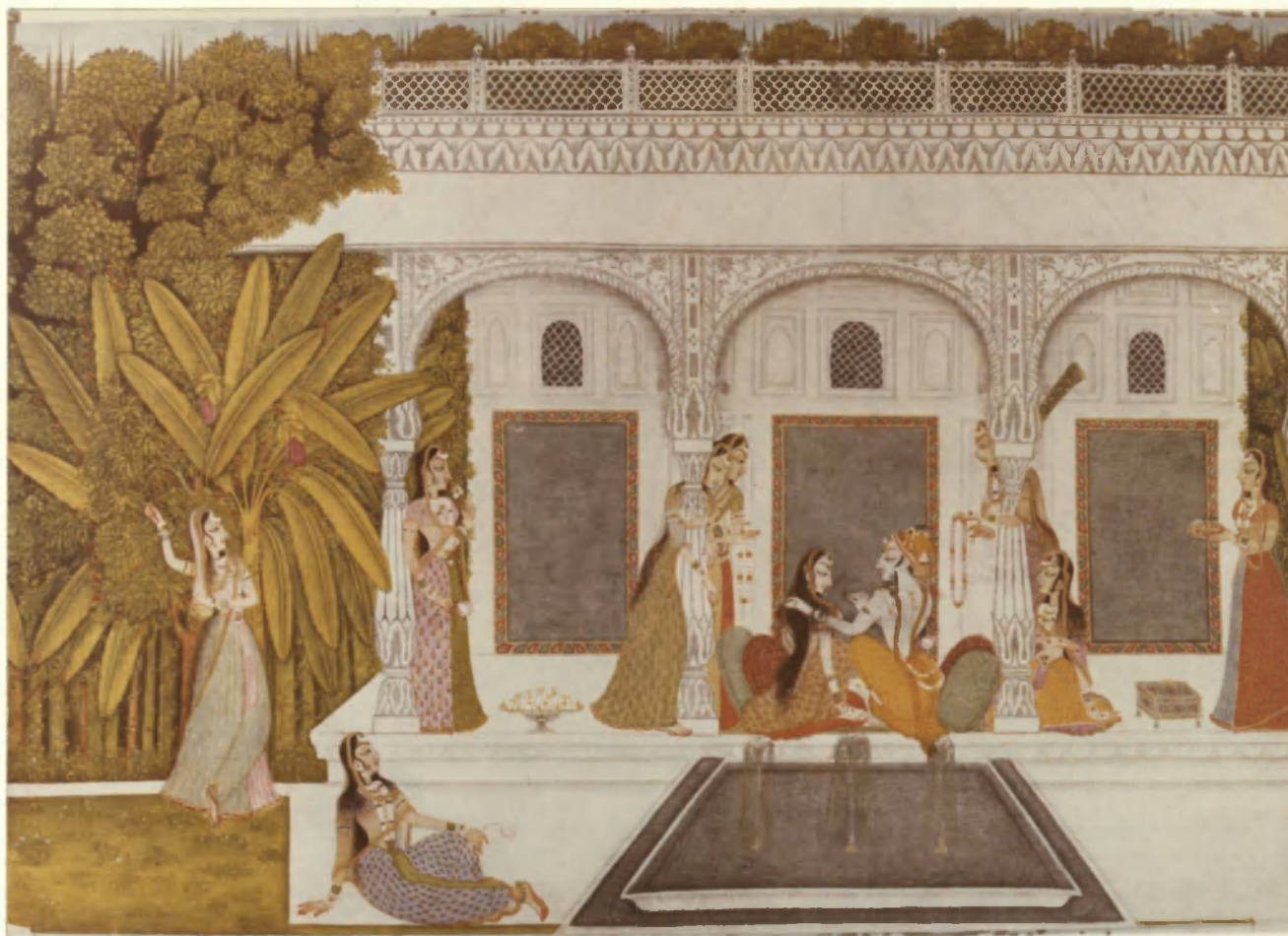


Figure 15. The Pavilion in the Grove -- Kishangarh eighteenth century. Collection: Lalit Kala Akademie. In Khandavala, Kishangarh Paintings, plate V.

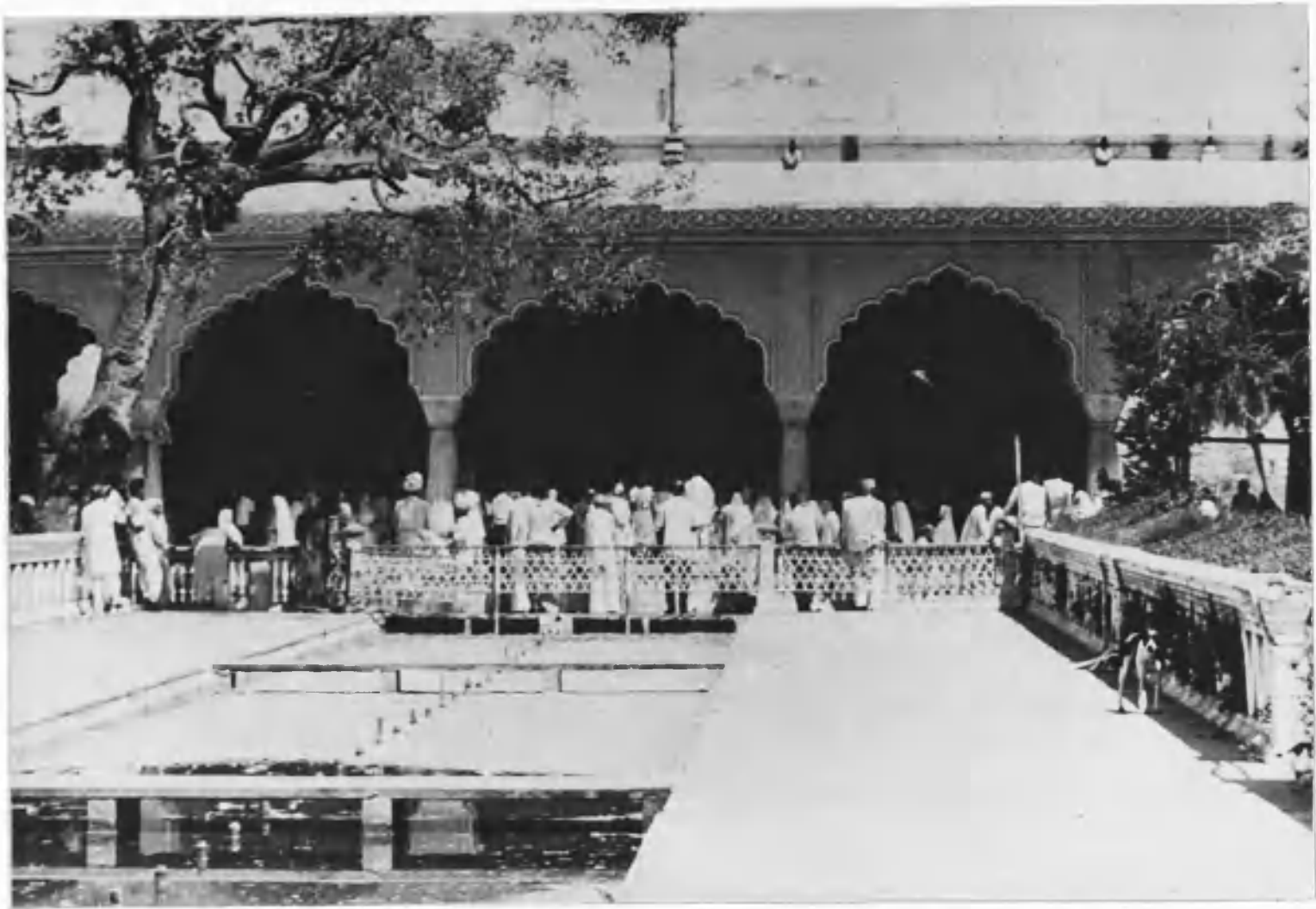


Figure 16. The Worship of Sri Govind Dev-ji at the Haveli in the City Palace During the Raj Bhoj Ceremony -- From Skelton, Rajasthani Temple Hangings, Figure 3, p. 20.

attire."¹⁴ This theme, lifting up the total economic, cultural and political empire of the goswamis in Mewar and Jaipur¹⁵ became the dominant motif of Kishangarh art as the sect's influence reached northward.

Figure 17 "Tambula Seva" (circa 1760) continues the theme and is an example of the depiction of dominant Vallabhacharya subjects in Kishangarh art after the peak of Nihal Chand's school in 1748. The style, use of color and treatment of the sky are noticeably different from Chand's miniatures. Yet, the motif initiated by the court artist continues in a magnification of the image of Krishna enthroned. Thus, although Tambula Seva is a common theme in Rajasthani Vaishnavite art, ". . . it has never been treated in so elegant a setting."¹⁶ Patronage continued as the role of the sect endured in the court.

Figure 18, showing the worship of Sri Nathji, was painted in the late eighteenth century and is another example of the same

14. Khandavala, Kishangarh Paintings, p. 3.

15. By 1700 the Sampradaya had become well known in Jaipur. The National Register of Private Records, No. 1, Part III, #1181 lists muafi grants issued to the sect since the middle of the seventeenth century. Two documents in particular show the early concern of the Maharajas of Jaipur for the cult. The first, a patta, was issued on 13 Budi, Miti Asoj, V. 1711 (1654 A.D.). It was granted by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh to the Goswami of the Govind Deoji temple and dealt with fodder for cows, perfumeries and other commercial matters relating to the trade controlled by the mandir. The second, a sanad, is undated. Granted by Madhav Rao Sindia to the Jaipur gosain and presumably of later origin, the sanad reveals a similar pattern of rent free use of muafi lands by the sect in Jaipur to that already in practice in Mewar. Four per cent of the taxes of goods produced on state (Khalsa) properties of Hinduan were sent directly to the Thakur. See, The National Register of Private Records, No. 1, Part III.

16. Khandavala, Kishangarh Paintings, p. 3.



Figure 17. Tambula Seva -- Kishangarh ca. 1760. Collection: Lalit Kala Akademie. In Khandavala, Kishangarh Paintings, plate 2.



Figure 18. Worship of Sri-Nathji -- Kishangarh, late eighteenth century. In Cleveland Museum of Art, Indian Art from the George P. Bickford Collection, Plate 94, p. 94.

phenomenon. The setting is still that of a palace. The deity's attendants still appear as princely servants.

Still another example of Vallabhacharya art in Kishangarh after 1748 is a painting of ruler Bahadur Singh (1741-81) a year before his death.¹⁷ The Maharaja is shown worshipping at the shrine of Sri Kalyan Ray, the form of Sri Nathji that became the kuladevata of the ruling family. The miniature is a clear and graphic illustration of the visible patronage of the Sampradaya by a succession of heads of state in Kishangarh.

In sum, the revolution in Vaishnavite art that began in Mewar was so influential that it spread to Bundi and Kishangarh¹⁸ and even to the far reaches of the sub-continent. Therein, Krishna was conceived as a Rajput prince and in miniature after miniature was enthroned and

17. Portland Art Museum, Rajput Miniatures, p. 37.

18. The influence of the Nathdwara school of pichhava's production was so strong that it affected renderings of Krishna throughout India. Walter Spink observes, "The pechwa's of Nathadwara, as well as related paintings on paper or on panels or on walls, were of course carried throughout India. Even the mode of representing and of worshipping the Lord Jagannath, who is only a powerful local variant of Vishnu-as-Krishna, found far to the east in the pilgrimage center of Puri, suggests an influence at a far remove." Spink, Krishnamandala, p. 37. One source concludes, "Goswami Sri Vithal Nathji Maharaj is the head of one of the principal houses of the Vallabhakare Sampradaya known as the Bara Muthreshji's house, which comes immediately next to the Tikai Samsthan of Nathdwara, and is the house of the religious preceptor of the ruling family. He has by adoption succeeded the late Maharaj Jiwan Lalji, son of Goswami Ranchhorlalji Maharaj of Kotah, and has the charge of two of the principal temples at Kishangarh, and the Balkrishen Lalji's temple at Jodhpur, with all hereditary muafes and ceeses attached to the temple, as grants from Kishangarh, Jodhpur and other states." Government of India, Rajputana and Ajmer, p. 122.

surrounded by royal attendants. The regents in whose courts these paintings were commissioned, so influenced the art that Krishna was commonly shown giving darshan to royalty.

In Jaipur, Kishangarh, Mewar, Bundi and other Rajput states the sect became the dominant religion of the court. In Kishangarh this influence became so pervasive that Savant Singh saw fit to spend his exiled years as a Vallabhacharya sanyasi. In Mewar and Jaipur regents built havelis in proximity to their summer retreats and city palaces and provided the gosains with income from taxation and commerce.

The cult had developed an economic and cultural base that stretched from one kingdom to another.¹⁹ The office of gosain, passed on through successive generations of descendents of Vitthalnath, controlled multiple temples across different parts of Rajasthan. Supported by and supporting this total system of dominance and authority was a body of literati and artists who in the renaissance of Sri Nathji found the means of extending and magnifying their own careers and expressing religious devotion. In a symbiotic relationship with the purveyors of the tradition, the goswamis, these craftsmen and artisans brought about a resurgence in Vaishnavite art. The reciprocity between painter and gosain under the umbrella of court patronage, maintained a total economic system that brought fame and reward to all.

19. By the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the havelis in Nathdwara, Kotah, Kishangarh and Jodhpur were inter-related.

CHAPTER 7

PATRONAGE AND DEVOTION IN THE CULT OF THE MAHARAJAS

As the focus of economic and cultural power the Hindu temple traditionally maximizes the abode of the deity who resides in the sanctum sanctorum. The god is lavished with expensive decorations and provided with a retinue of priests and servants. The image is enthroned as visiting royalty and worshipped as the center of ritualistic authority and purity. The shebait who administers the temple and directs the pujas offered to the murti is an entrepreneur. Under his direction the economic power of the institution is extended as capital funds are invested, rent collected, pilgrims taxed and lands leased.¹

1. Dieter-Evers in Monks, Priests and Peasants demonstrates the equivalent process among Theravada Buddhist monks. Dieter-Evers examines villages controlled by one of the largest monasteries in Sri Lanka and cites specific evidence of the monastic use of power and influence to extract both service and capital from villages under the institution's control. He discusses two kinds of land control utilized by the sangha. In the first or service tenure, no formation of monastic capital is permitted as the use of the land by tenants is directly transferred into temple service. There is no cash transaction as rent becomes payable through hereditary forms of temple labor. In the second category the land is farmed by sharecroppers, rented or leased to tea, coconut or rubber estates or directly managed by monks through their observers. This type of property management affords capital formulation and is a great source of monastic power. Through these two kinds of land tenure systems the sangha has developed the means of exerting great influence far into the interior of the country and has created a way of controlling capital investments with no direct participation by the monks themselves. Hence, the expected temple services are adequately maintained, the monk is left to associate only with other members of the sangha as proscribed by the

The bhakti temple tradition of North India exemplifies this established mechanism. While espousing doctrines of reform and renewed access to the Great Tradition of Hinduism, bhakti sampradayas depend on the same methods of entrepreneurial control that the classical forms of Vaishnavism so readily demonstrate.

This dissertation has demonstrated the process of economic support based on patronage of a major bhakti sect, the Vallabha Sampradaya, in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. Complementing current studies of the Sampradaya by sociologists, textualists and philosophers² the work delineates the ongoing process of patronage for nearly two hundred years. The Vallabhacharya gosains systemized a tradition of warm relationships with princes and kings for the continued glorification of the deity they served. Under their leadership the havelis of the seven svarupas of Sri Nathji became sacral palaces exemplifying the royal character of the god and the generous support that his patrons provided.

In a reciprocal process both the image of the patron and the countenance of the deity were maximized. By donating whole villages to the cult, the Maharanas of Mewar and other states assured public acclamation of their devotion and benevolence. Entire temples were built with funds provided by the state. Rulers convened large

vinaya. At the same time the bhikkhu is able to wield great political and financial influence.

2. The recent studies of Barz, "Early Developments within the Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacharya"; Marfatia, Philosophy of Vallabacarya; and Jindal, Culture of a Sacred Town have set the tone of examination of this sect in the last ten years.

festivals (Sat Svarupa and Annakut) where the propagation of the Vallabhacharya faith and consolidation of political allies became part of the same effort.

The process that the goswamis sustained was neither isolated nor confined to a brief period of years. Rather, court patronage of the sect, first initiated in 1577 by an imperial farman from the Mughal emperor Akbar, continued through the devolution of the Empire. It was extended throughout Rajputana in Kishangarh, Bundi, Kotah and Jaipur. In Mewar, where Maharana Jagat Singh expressed an interest in the cult as early as 1648, the succession of royal grants was maintained through the third decade of the twentieth century.³ The constant flow of revenue from Empire and state into the Sampradaya's coffers assured the patrons of the sect that the economic and cultural benefits of the deity's presence on their soil would continue unabated. The gift of muafi grants in Mewar provided the Rajput rulers with the sustained fruits of established centers of pilgrimage. As provincial chiefs and rulers of neighboring states sought to magnify their own holdings, the number of havelis grew.

The patronage that the sect received was designed to continue over a long period of time. As the recipients of a body of Mughal

3. The continuation of royal support in Mewar is demonstrated in, Government of Rajasthan, Report of the Nathdwara Inquiry Commission. The Report lists the contents of the Sampradaya's treasuries in Nathdwara as well as documentary evidence of the continuing interest in the sect by Mewari regents before 1947. These data are complimented by later muafi grants included in Shastri's Kanktoli-ka-Itihasa which follow the form and style of eighteenth century edicts but in a twentieth century context.

farmans and parwanas the descendents of Vitthalnath were told that they need not demand a fresh grant every year. Muafi edicts in Mewar assured the gosains of similar benefits. Patronage was an ongoing, mutually beneficial process.

Moreover, generations of Vallabhacharya goswamis became friend and ally of the crown. Members of the nobility under the guidance of heads of state commissioned paintings expressing the dominance of Krishna. The deity was rendered as the visible extension of Rajput authority. Support of the cult's art was so great that the influence of the Nathdwara school was felt throughout Rajasthan.⁴ Monarchs commissioned miniatures and pichhavaais showing their devotion to the seven svarupas and the companionship of ruler and priest. In personal correspondence, maharajas urged the adoption of the way of pushtimarg. Later documents even show the increasing interdependence of church and state as the Maharanas of Mewar adopted an active role in the selection of priests.

The dynamics of propaganda were a large part of the ability of the gosains to maximize their assets. Appealing to traditional symbols of authority and antiquity they promoted their cause. When, for example, the sect transferred its major deities from Mathura to Mewar state in 1669 it was with all of the pomp and ceremony of a mela. The image was placed in a cart and in a dramatic re-enactment of the ratha tradition. In the same manner as the ritualistic circumambulation of temple villages by huge carts in South India, so Sri Nathji traversed

4. This dissertation follows the initial work done on Vallabhacharya art by historian Skelton in Rajasthani Temple Hangings.

the perimeter of his new realm. When the cart stuck in the mud the very spot upon which the procession stopped was deemed to be the appropriate location of the sanctum sanctorum. Hence, the subsequent support of Mewari regents was popularly perceived as the will of the deity who now sought to establish his throne. Further, the magnification of myths of persecution increased the prevalent understanding of patronage as an accepted means of granting the god refuge and shelter. The muafi grants of the late seventeenth century became the natural concern of the state for Sri Nathji's survival in the midst of the iconoclastic policies of Aurangzeb.

Similar myths had been applied to Vallabha's initial discovery of Sri Nathji in Gokul in the fifteenth century. Covered with earth, and with arm outstretched the god had been mistaken for a local snake deity. The subsequent installation of the dark lord in a haveli of regal proportions assured a more suitable environment. Moreover, the enactment of darshan and the institution of a full range of royal symbolism was seen as the public acclamation that in the best of Hindu traditions a recognized acharya had saved his kuladevata from abandonment and disgrace.

The gift of land to Vallabhacharya havelis in Mewar and the unavowed assurance of complete protection against all foes maximized this tradition. In absolute safety Sri Nathji's comfort was guaranteed. Muafi grants of the seventeenth century show that the monarchy was committed to the defense of the deity and his realm. As the fitting servants of Krishna, a succession of Mewari princes secured the ability of the god to dispense grace and to alleviate suffering.

Through the use of these techniques the cult promulgated a total economic system based on the domination of commerce and taxation. Pilgrims were taxed, goods and services assessed with the full agreement of the head of state who had provided for the deity's refuge. Nathdwara became a holy city and exerted full control over its environment. Regents in neighboring states donated villages and gave tribute to the Lord who was properly enthroned in a holy city. Again, within the context of the classical symbols of tradition and authority there could be no contradiction.

The descendents of Vitthalnath cultivated the images of holy man and acharya. Manipulating cultural symbols of power and dominance they extended their control. In keeping with the best of Vaishnavite doctrines they were addressed as "gosains" or "goswamis." Similarly, in a clever management of the sign of secular authority they were called "maharajas." Creating numerous jobs, employing hundreds of workers and managing large estates they supported their economic position by an appeal to scripture and tradition.

The process that these religious leaders sustained has been widely studied in other contexts. Whether it be the role of church and state in the sixteenth century Reformation in Europe or the examination of monastic landlords in twentieth century Sri Lanka, the dynamic is much the same. The ability of sects to associate themselves with larger sources of authority is an established mechanism for the acquisition of power. Further, the manner in which reform movements have in a variety of cultures appealed to tradition to legitimate doctrine and practice is documented.

In the context of South Asian politics and religion this use of scripture and authority is well supported. Krishna, for example, was deified through an association with the cult of Vasudeva. Numerous saints and acharyas have used the same process to legitimate their reforms. In the nineteenth century Swami Dayananda, Ramakrishna and Ram Mohan Roy all looked to sources of scriptural authority to propagate their movements and causes.

Similarly, the life of Vallabha was equated with the expected pursuits of an acharya, holy man and great scholar as defined by the Great Tradition of Hinduism. Vallabha's birth was perceived with supernatural overtones as his life was understood in terms of the direct intervention of deity. The Sampradaya was understood to be the legitimate heir to the teachings of Vishnu Swami. Vallabha became the expected proponent of an ongoing tradition defined by successive lines of Vaishnava acharyas.

As the direct descendents of Vallabha the gosains continued much the same process. Enveloping their roles in legends of cultural dominance they were understood as priests and holy men. The maharajas were the ancestral caretakers of the seven avatars of Sri Nathji. The god had been their kuladevata since the fifteenth century. Constructing their havelis within miles of the birth place of Krishna they had maximized the association of their office with the god.

By appealing to the traditional symbols of the patronage of temples and images by monarchs, the maharajas placed themselves in the mainstream of Hinduism. Using myths of darshan or royal worship they extended the image of the temple, redefining it as a haveli. Whether in

secular states or the shrine the expected realm of Sri Nathji became a setting of total comfort and elegance. Surrounded by a retinue of courtly servants as well as princes and kings the darshan of Sri Nathji saw Krishna enthroned. As the sustainers of this tradition and the defenders of the faith the gosains set the deity in the center of sacred and secular power and utilized their office to reap the benefits of the deity's position. In achieving this end over the course of more than three hundred years they created an empire, blessed by monarchs and poor bhaktas alike as the legitimate realm of the dark god.

GLOSSARY

Hindi is transcribed in the international Roman alphabet accepted for Sanskrit with the following differences:

1. Hindi words which are anglicized, such as names of persons and places, are not transcribed.
2. Except in Sanskrit loans, intersyllabic or word final /a/ is not indicated if not pronounced in Hindi.
3. Titles of Hindi books are transcribed exactly as in print.

<u>Text</u>	<u>Transcription</u>
acharya	ācārya
Annakut	Annakut
astachap	ashtachāp
Balkrshn	Bālkrśna
bhajan	bhajan
Bhaktamala	Bhaktamālā
bhakti	bhakti
bhikkhu	bhikṣu
bhum	bhūmā
bigha	bīghā
Braj Bhasha	Braj Bhāṣā
brahmin	brahmin
dargah	dargāh
darshan	darsan
deva	dev
devata	devtā
divan	dīvān
Dwarkadhish	Dwārkādhīś
farman	farmān
gadi	gaddī
Ghanshyam	Ghansyām
ghee	ghī
gopi	gopī
gosain	gosānī/gosaeyān
goswami	goswāmī
grihastha	gr̥hasth
guru	guru
Govardhanath	Govarddhan Nāth

Gokulnath
 in'am
 itihās
 jagir
 jāti
 Kalyanray
 khālśa
 lakh
 madad-i-ma'ash
 Madanmohan
 mahal
 maharaja
 maharana
 Mathuresh
 maya
 mela
 muafi
 Mughal
 Nagari Das
 nishan
 pada
 panchagavya
 pargana
 parwana
 patinirvana
 pichhavai
 puja
 pujari
 pushtimarg
 Raghunath
 Rajput
 Ras Lila
 sampradaya
 samskara
 sanad
 sangha
 sanyasi
 sarkar
 sasan
 seva
 sevak
 Shavite
 shebait
 shuddhadvaita
 sufi
 Sur Sagar
 sri
 svarupa
 Tailangana
 thakur
 Tilkayat

Gokulnāth
 in'am
 itihās
 jāgīr
 jāti
 Kalyāṇray
 khālsā
 lakh
 madad-i-ma'āsh
 Madan Mohan
 mahal
 mahārāj
 mahārānā
 Māthures
 māyā
 mela
 mu'āfi
 Muḡal
 Nāgrī Dās
 niśān
 pad
 pañcgavya
 parganā
 parwānā
 patinirvān
 pichvāi
 pūjā
 pujārī
 puṣṭimārg
 Raghunāth
 Rajpūt
 Rās Līlā
 sampradāy
 saṃskār
 sanad
 saṅgh
 sanyāsī
 sarkār
 śāsan
 sevā
 sevak
 Saivite
 shebait
 'suddhādvaita
 Sūr Sāgar
 'srī
 svarūp
 Tailaṅgānā
 thākur
 Tilkayat

ulama	ulama
utsava	utsav
varta	vārttā
varnashramadharma	varṇāśramdharm
vinaya	vinaya
Yadunath	Yadunāth
vaishnavite	Vaiṣṇavite

The following technical terms are used throughout this dissertation and pertain to the Vallabha Sampradaya's own unique vocabulary:

adhikara--a temple official employed by the gosain to administer daily needs of the institution. Duties of the adhikara include obtaining food stuffs for prasad.

darshan--a form of puja in which the deity grants an audience to his subjects in the manner of a prince or king. Darshan is also a technique used in the courts and palaces of enhancing the authority of a king who formally greets his subjects.

gosain
goswami

maharaj--the descendents of Vallabhacharya and heirs to the leadership of individual temples.

haveli--Vallabhacharya temples which are designed as palatial mansions. Havelis are also the residence of the gosain.

pushtimarg--"the way of grace." Pushtimarg is a primary theological tenet of Vallabha and refers to the conceptualization of worship as a human response to divine grace.

sampradaya--an established sect in the north Indian bhakti tradition.

shuddhadvaita--pure non-dualism; the school of Hindu philosophy supported by Vallabha.

svarupa--an incarnation or form of the deity Sri Nathji (Krishna).

Additional terms:

shebait--a south Indian word used to refer to the temple manager. The authority of the shebait is equivalent to the gosain in north India.

APPENDIX A

CONTINUING PATRONAGE OF THE VALLABHA SAMPRADAYA IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The data show the continuity of the patronage of the Vallabha Sampradaya by the Maharanas of Mewar from the seventeenth through twentieth centuries. Lists of villages given to the sect by the Maharanas reveal the geographical diversity of the cult's control by 1930. A map showing the distribution of thikanas containing villages deeded to the Kankroli temple is evidence of the Sampradaya's influence in most parts of Mewar. A diagram indicates the land control of the Nathdwara gosains in the twentieth century throughout Rajasthan.

These documents show the cumulative result in modern Indian history of an economic and cultural process begun in 1577. The Vallabhacharya gosains acquired land and power through the propagation of the way of pushtimarg in the courts. In turn, the major havelis of Nathdwara and Kankroli became fief holders exercising dominance and unqualified authority over a large segment of the population.

Table 1. Vallabhacharya Gosains and Mewari Patrons, 1602-1931

Tilkayat No.	Maharaj Sri (<u>Gosain</u>)	Maharana
	Birth/Investiture/Death Place of Residence	Birth/Investiture/Death
3	<u>Giridharji</u> 1662/1670/1718, 19 V. 1606/1615/1662, 63 A.D. Gokul	<u>Jagat Singh</u> 1664/1684/1709 V. 1602/1628/1653 A.D.
4	<u>Brajbhusanji</u> 1700/1718, 19/1758 V. 1644/1662, 63/1702 A.D. Asotiya	<u>Raj Singh</u> 1686/1709/1737 V. 1630/1653/1681 A.D. <u>Jay Singh</u> 1710/1737/1755 V. 1654/1681/1699 A.D.
5	<u>Giridharji II</u> 1745/1758/1803 V. 1689/1702/1757 A.D. Kankroli	<u>Amar Singh II</u> 1729/1755/1767 V. 1673/1699/1711 A.D. <u>Sangram Singh II</u> 1747/1767/1790 V. 1691/1711/1734 A.D.
6	<u>Brajbhusanji II</u> 1765/1803, 4/1833 V. 1709/1747, 8/1777 A.D.	<u>Jagat Singh II</u> 1766/1790/1808 V. 1710/1734/1752 A.D. <u>Pratap Singh II</u> 1781/1808/1810 V. 1725/1752/1754 A.D. <u>Raj Singh II</u> 1800/1810/1817 V. 1744/1854/1760 A.D. <u>Ari Singh II</u> 1797/1817/1829 V. 1741/1761/1773 A.D.
7	<u>Vitthalnathji</u> 1811/1834/1848, 49 V. 1755/1778/1792, 93 A.D.	<u>Hamir Singh</u> 1818/1829/1834 V. 1762/1773/1778 A.D.

Table 1.--Continued

Tilkayat No.	Maharaj Sri (Gosain)	Maharana
	Birth/Investiture/Death Place of Residence	Birth/Investiture/Death
8	<u>Brajbhusanji III</u> 1835/1849-1876 V. 1779/1793/1820 A.D.	<u>Bhim Singh</u> 1824/1834/1885 V. 1768/1778/1779 A.D.
9	<u>Purushottamji</u> 1847/1876/1903 V. 1791/1820/1847 A.D.	<u>Javan Singh</u> 1857/1885/1895 V. 1810/1829/1839 A.D. <u>Sardar Singh</u> 1855/1895/1899 V. 1799/1839/1843 A.D.
10	<u>Giridharlalji IV</u> 1898/1908/1935 V. 1842/1852/1879 A.D.	<u>Sarup Singh</u> 1871/1899/1918 V. 1815/1843/1862 A.D. <u>Shambhu Singh</u> 1904/1918/1931 V. 1848/1862/1875 A.D.
11	<u>Balkrshnalalji</u> 1924/1936/1973 V. 1868/1880/1917 A.D.	<u>Sajjan Singh</u> 1916/1931/1941 V. 1860/1875/1885 A.D.
12	<u>Dvarkeshalalji</u> 1964/1973/1974 V. 1908/1917/1918 A.D.	<u>Phatah Singh</u> 1906/1941/1987 V. 1850/1885/1931 A.D.
13	<u>Sri Vrajbhushanlalji IV</u> "Present Tilkayit" 1968/1976 V. 1912/1930 A.D.	<u>Sri Bhupal Singh</u> Present Maharana 1940/1987 V. 1894/1931 A.D.

Source: Shastri, Kankroli kā Itihāsa, p. 125.

श्री दा० फा० वार्ता



श्रीगिरिधरलालजी

महाराज
कांकरोली

Sri Giridharlalji
Maharaj
Kankroli

तथा

and

श्रीशम्भुसिंहजी

महाराणा
उदयपुर

Sri Shambhu Singh
Maharana
Udaipur

Figure 19. Portrait of Gosain Giridharilalji and His Patron Maharana Shambhu Singh of Mewar (c. 1862-75) -- Source: Shastri, Kankroli ka Itihasa, p. 32.

Table 2. Villages Given by the Government of Mewar to the Kankroli Temple

-
-
1. Kankroli
 2. Havala
 3. Asotiya
 4. Emdi
 5. Lavana
 6. Amaloi
 7. Bhukhada
 8. Meniya
 9. Pemakheda
 10. Phiyavadi
 11. Barolya
 12. Phulpura
 13. Ranikheda
 14. Pithavas
 15. Tejapura
 16. Sangat
 17. Mandavada
 18. Javarkya
 19. Rupakun Varbai
 20. Bhityani
-

Source: Shastri, Kānkrolī kā Itihāsa, p. 25.

Table 3. Villages Acquired by the Kankroli Temple from Thikanas in Mewar

-
-
1. Dhaukal Singh's field--from the thikanā of Devgarh
 2. Daulatpura
 3. Bhupatpura--from the thikana of Sadri
 4. Kilapura--from the thikana of Baneda
 5. Banseda--from the thikana of Shahpura
 6. Sadi--from the thikana of Begun, Doliyan
 7. Sripura--from the thikana of Bijoliya
 8. Ganeshpura and Ugarpura from the kingdom of Kota
-

Source: Shastri, Kānkrolī kā Itihāsa, p. 25.



Figure 20. Mewar--Showing the Distribution of Thikanas Containing Villages Deeded to the Kankroli Temple, 1940

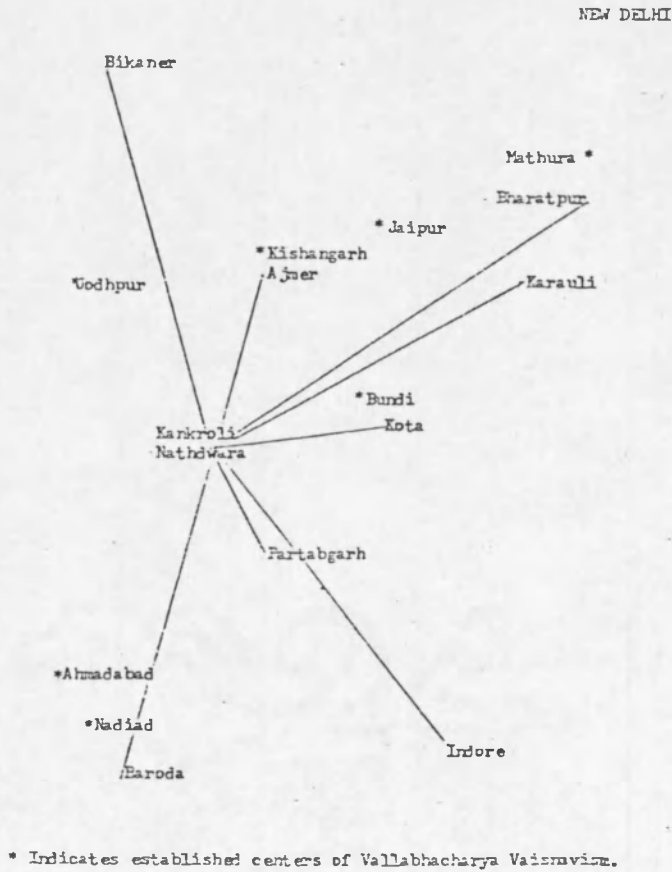


Figure 21. Land Control of the Nathdwara Gosains in the Twentieth Century

APPENDIX B

TAXATION OF GOODS AND SERVICES BY VALLABHACHARYA GOSAINS

In the nineteenth century the commercial activities of the Vallabhacharya gosains were observed and recorded by Vrajratna.¹ Vrajratna witnessed the use of a system of taxation levied on goods and services. The list of these assessments is firm evidence of the broad economic base that the Sampradaya developed. Cloth, precious metals, jewels, rope, iron, spices as well as the work of brokers, insurance agents, bankers, import brokers and other merchants were taxed. The maharajas entered every sector of commerce. Their combination of sacred and secular realms was without equal.

Similar patterns of influence and authority were part of the cult's control in Nathdwara. Pilgrims were taxed as they entered the holy city. Income from fees in the market place were channeled directly into the temple's coffers. The goswamis controlled commerce and employment, regulating the goods and services required for the maintenance of its deities as well as the commodities consumed by its devotees. This total system of influence was magnified by the continuous flow of muafi grants, given the sect for over two and a half centuries.

1. Vrajratna, A History of the Sect of Maharajas or Vallabhacharyas, p. 146.

Table 4. Fees Levied on Goods and Services in the Gujarat (c. 1865)

Silk, sugar, spices, metals, sackcloth, cotton, opium	1/4 anna per 100 rupees of sale affected
Cloth, silk, cotton and every other species	1/4 anna per 100 rupees of sale affected
Bills of exchange, drafts, etc.	1 anna per every thousand rupees transaction
Gold and silver specie	1 anna per every thousand rupees transaction
Bills and specie brokerage	1 anna per every thousand rupees transaction
Cloth brokerage	1/4 anna per every hundred rupees transaction
Agency brokers	1/4 anna per every hundred rupees transaction
Brokers to European houses	1/4 anna per every hundred rupees transaction
Grain brokers	1/4 anna per every hundred rupees transaction
Pearls and jewels	1/4 anna per every hundred rupees transaction
Insurance brokers	1/4 anna per every hundred rupees transaction
Muccadans	8 annas per every hundred rupees of their income
Every patimar laden with goods from Malabar and consigned to a Vaisnava	Rs. 1-1/2 per vessel
Every padow (native craft) from Rajupur, and of which the goods are consigned to a Vaisnava	9 annas per vessel
Grain of all kinds	1 anna per candy
Ghi	1/2 anna per maund

Table 4.--Continued

Oil	1/2 anna per maund
Rice	1 anna per mudra
Malabar cloth	1 anna per every hundred rupees transaction
Dealers in Gold	Rs. 1-1/4 per every hundred rupees worth of sale effected
Cotton yarn	2 annas per maund
Rope	1 rupee per every hundred rupees worth of sale effected
Iron	1 anna per candy
Pepper, etc.	1-1/4 anna per cwt.

APPENDIX C

THE HINDOLA TRADITION

The poster on page 133 was obtained from administrators of the Dwarkadhish temple in Mathura in 1973. Entitled, "List of Hindola (ceremonies) and hours in Shravan," the document refers to the swinging rites conducted in the temple in the lunar month of Shravan or July-August. Shravan is the fifth lunar month of the Hindu calendar.

The hindola, during which the image is placed on a royal swing, has been of central importance to the Vallabha Sampradaya since the sixteenth century. Utilized as part of a darshan the hindola ritual entertains the deity in a regal manner. In Sirohi, and Bundi where the sect's art was commissioned in the courts, the influence of the hindola was so strong that heads of state substituted themselves for the god hoping to capture the dominance and authority that the rite inspired. In the Gujarat, Vallabhacharya gosains placed themselves on the swing in a similar attempt to take the place of the deity. In sum, the hindola ceremony is a visible symbol of ritualistic power borrowed by ruler and priest alike to magnify their image. Its appearance in miniatures in Sirohi and Bundi is firm evidence of the Sampradaya's strong influence in the courts where the art was commissioned.

• श्रीद्वारकेशोजयति •

श्रावणा हिंडोला तथा घटाओं की सूची

श्री ठा० द्वारिकाधीशजी महाराज, (मथुरा)

नं०	जुलाई अगस्त १९७३	श्रावण तथा भाद्रपद	दिन	नाम घटाएं
१	१६ जुलाई	श्रावण कृ. १	सोमवार	हिंडोला प्रारम्भ
२	२६ जुलाई	श्रावण कृ. ११	गुरुवार	फूलों का हिंडोला
३	२८ जुलाई	श्रावण कृ. १३	शनिवार	केशरी घटा
४	२९ जुलाई	श्रावण कृ. ३०	रविवार	हरी घटा
५	३१ जुलाई	श्रावण शु. २	मंगलवार	सोसनी घटा
६	१ अगस्त	श्रावण शु. ३	बुधवार	फल फूल का हिंडोला
७	२ अगस्त	श्रावण शु. ४	गुरुवार	बासमानी घटा
८	४ अगस्त	श्रावण शु. ६	शनिवार	लाल घटा
९	६ अगस्त	श्रावण शु. ८	सोमवार	गुलाबी घटा
१०	८ अगस्त	श्रावण शु. १०	बुधवार	श्याम यानी काली घटा
११	१० अगस्त	श्रावण शु. १२	शुक्रवार	नौ हिंडोला व लहरिया घटा
१२	१२ अगस्त	श्रावण शु. १४	रविवार	सफेद घटा
१३	१५ अगस्त	भादों कृ. १	बुधवार	हिंडोला विजय
१४	२१ अगस्त	भादों कृ. ८	मंगलवार	श्री कृष्ण जन्माष्टमी
१५	२२ अगस्त	भादों कृ. ९	बुधवार	नन्द महोत्सव

नोट : १—हिंडोला के दर्शन नित्य प्रति सायंकाल तथा फैतरिया घटा के दर्शन सायंकाल ५ बजे होंगे बाकी सब घटाओं के दर्शन सायंकाल ७ बजे बाद होंगे ।

२—श्री कृष्ण जन्माष्टमी रात्रि ११-४५

३—नन्द महोत्सव प्रातःकाल

राधामोहन चतुर्वेदी अधिकारी

फोन ३२१

मन्दिर श्री ठाकुर द्वारकाधीशजी महाराज मथुरा

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